

**NEW KIT SPECIAL**  
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**EXPERT SKILLS**  
**HDR IN B&W**

PAGE 20



Saturday 20 March 2010

amateur

# photographer

FOR EVERYONE WHO LOVES PHOTOGRAPHY, EVERY WEEK!

[www.amateurphotographer.co.uk](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk)

## PANASONIC LUMIX G2

DSLR shape with vari-angle display and new touch-screen shooting features



PAGE 5



TESTED

PAGE 55

### SONY ALPHA 450

The lowest priced 14MP DSLR on the market

£2.50



### AP'S GUIDE TO... ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 8

PART 4

Full Edit mode – the tools and how to use them

PAGE 43

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP  
ELEMENTS 8

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Get the most out of your photos.

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ICONIC CAMERA



PAGE 67

### CONTAX RTS

Who really made the RTS?





**RICOH**

# GXR

The new era of digital photography

**Superior Technology. Unparalleled Quality. Radically Different.**

**NEW  
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Actual size



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Dedicated site, stockist list etc: [www.ricohgxr.co.uk](http://www.ricohgxr.co.uk)



# Contents

**Amateur Photographer** For everyone who loves photography

**SOME** people cross the Atlantic to visit Disneyland and Mickey's Magic Kingdom, but that's up to them. My idea of a theme-park visit is three days at a camera show, where you get to see practically every camera in production, some of the people who actually design them with their own pencils, and you get to hear about which bits of kit will be making their way to our test lab within the next few months. I'm not alone. I'm certain that if we ran a reader coach trip from central London to the PMA show in Los Angeles for a two-week land/sea journey, we'd have to hold a lottery to allocate the seats.

This year's show gave us an excellent chance to

catch up with manufacturer plans for the year ahead, and while actual new cameras were a little light on the ground we got news of concepts and confirmation of new models on the way. It's great to see Sony joining the move to mirrorless micro-system cameras, and to see the host of fast lenses heading our way from each of the main brands. To bring you all the news, we've got an extra section in the magazine this week. Just turn to page 49 for the *AP Informer*.



**Damien Demolder**  
Editor

## THE AP READERS' POLL

**IN AP 6 MARCH WE ASKED...**

Do you tend to shoot single images or in series?



**YOU ANSWERED...**

A I shoot mostly standalone images	44%
B I mostly shoot in series	11%
C I do a bit of both	45%

**THIS WEEK WE ASK...**

Do you think Nikon and Canon should introduce mirrorless micro-system cameras?

**VOTE ONLINE** [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk)

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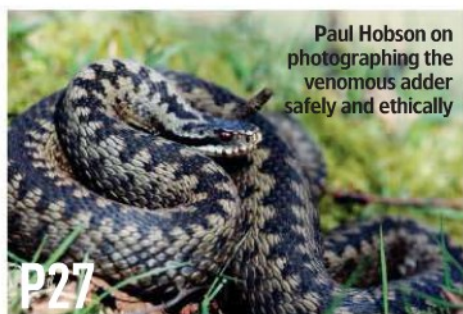
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**HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT** Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/readerspotlight](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/readerspotlight) for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

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\*Cashback available on  $\alpha$ 450,  $\alpha$ 500 and  $\alpha$ 550 DSLR cameras and selected lenses. Promotion runs from 4 March 2010 to 3 May 2010 at participating dealers. Terms & Conditions apply. See in-store for details. 'Sony', 'make.believe', ' $\alpha$ ' and their logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Corporation.



**I took a picture of my son on my phone and this security guard came up and told me it wasn't allowed because I could be a paedophile**

Parent photo ban, page 6

12.1MP Lumix G2 revealed • Touchscreen LCD • £629 pricetag

## PANASONIC TO LAUNCH G1 SUCCESSOR

**ENTHUSIAST** and advanced DSLR users are the target for a new HD video-equipped Micro Four Thirds camera from Panasonic called the Lumix DMC-G2.

Set to replace the G1, the G2 is a 12.1-million-pixel model claimed to be the world's smallest and lightest system [interchangeable-lens] camera with a moveable screen.

Although not due in shops until June, the G2 uses the same imaging sensor as the G1, which was announced in 2008.

The G2 will cost £629 in a kit that includes a new Lumix G Vario 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Asph Mega OIS lens. A body-only price is yet to be confirmed.

Panasonic's expansion of its Micro Four Thirds family comes as the firm claims to have dominated this relatively new area of the market last Christmas.

Drawing on figures supplied to it by GfK Retail & Technology, the firm says it grabbed 9.1% of the UK's entire interchangeable-lens camera market in December 2009, compared to a '5.4%' share for its rival Olympus.

'It really encourages us how

consumers have accepted the technology,' said Panasonic UK's DSLR product manager John Mitchell.

Key features of the G2 include a 3in touchscreen 'free-angle' LCD (460,000-dot) display and a new Venus Engine HD2 image processor intended to boost processing speed and deliver 'exceptional noise reduction'.

The G2's electronic viewfinder carries a resolution of 1.44 million dots, says Panasonic.

Features include equivalent ISO sensitivity ranging from 100-6400 and a 3.2-frames-per-second frame rate.

The photographer can select from nine AF points (23-area AF) and use the Touch MF assist option to touch and enlarge an area of the scene (up to five times). A focusing meter appears by rotating the focus ring.

A touch-shutter option allows the user to focus on the touched area and release the shutter



automatically. This should prove useful when shooting at low angles or when using a tripod.

Photographers can then review their captured images on screen by sliding a finger across it.

The launch also brings Panasonic's Intelligent Resolution

[sharpness control] technology to its G-series models.

To enhance the creativity of movie recording, the firm has added Motion picture P,

a mode allowing the user to control aperture by rotating the rear dial.

Users can even shoot a still photo during video recording. The G2 records HD movies (1280x720 pixels) in AVCHD Lite and Motion JPEG (30 frames per second) formats.

New movie mode features include a 'touch-focus' function and an 'extra optical' zoom said to extend zoom power by 3x.

There is also the option to remove - in-camera - scenes from movie clips that are not needed. This should help save on storage space.

**LATEST NEWS ONLINE**

amateurlphotographer.co.uk

## Lord Carlile calls for power to be scrapped ABOLISH STOP AND SEARCH, SAYS WATCHDOG

**AP RIGHTS WATCH**  
Committed to defending your photographic rights!

**THE** Government's terrorism watchdog Lord Carlile has confirmed to AP that he has called for Section 44 of the Terrorism Act to be 'repealed'.

Lord Carlile of Berriew QC confirmed the accuracy of the contents of an article published by London's *Evening Standard*, in which he says Section 44 is having a 'disproportionately bad effect on community relations'.

'Nothing fills my in-tray and inbox more

than complaints on the use of Section 44,' he was quoted as saying in a speech to the Policy Exchange think-tank.

He added: 'I suggest that there should be a political accommodation now between all parties for the repeal of Section 44 in its present form.'

Lord Carlile wants a new law that allows searches without suspicion only during terrorist incidents and 'truly iconic events', or outside a limited number of 'critical national infrastructure' sites such as power stations, reported the *Evening Standard*.

Many amateur and professional photographers have complained about the unfair use of Section 44, which gives a police officer the power to stop someone without reasonable suspicion that they are involved in terrorist activity.

The controversy came to a head on 23 January when around 2,000 photographers staged a protest in Trafalgar Square.

Shortly afterwards the Home Office said police will continue to stop and search photographers using their anti-terrorism powers.

In January, police use of Section 44 Stop and Search anti-terrorism powers was ruled illegal by a European court.

## SNAP SHOTS

● Pentax has confirmed the upcoming launch of its long-awaited 645D medium-format digital camera. The 40-million-pixel model is due to go on sale in Japan in May. However, the firm has yet to confirm whether it will go on sale in the UK. For a full report see next week's *News*.

● Alf Gregory, who served as the official photographer on the first successful ascent of Everest in 1953, has died aged 96. Gregory once said that he went up the mountain as an amateur and returned as a professional. Long before the days of digital imaging, Alf's undeveloped rolls of Kodachrome film took a week to arrive in Kathmandu.

● The Photographers' Place, which ceased running workshops 14 years ago, has revived its Derbyshire-based courses. Visit <http://photographersplace.co.uk> for details.



**Do you have a story?**

Contact Chris Cheesman  
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amateurlphotographer  
@ipmedia.com



A week of photographic opportunity

## PHOTODIARY

Wednesday 17 March

**EXHIBITION** Rankin's Cheeky – exhibition of 'edgy erotica', until 11 April at Annroy Gallery, London NW5 4BA. Tel: 0207 284 7320.

**EXHIBITION** African Fever: Performing Africa in Europe by photographer Jessica Kendall, until 27 March at Brunei Gallery/SOAS, London WC1H 0XG. Tel: 0207 637 2388. Visit [www.soas.ac.uk/gallery](http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery).

Thursday 18 March

**EXHIBITION** David Solomons: Up West, until 4 April at Third Floor Gallery, Cardiff CF10 5AD. Visit [www.thirdfloorgallery.com](http://www.thirdfloorgallery.com).

**EXHIBITION** Steve Macleod: Blackwater, until 24 April at Atlas Gallery, London W1U 7NF. Tel: 0207 224 4192. Visit [www.atlasgallery.com](http://www.atlasgallery.com).

**EXHIBITION** British Wildlife Photograph Awards, until 22 March at Calke Abbey, Ticknall, Derby, Derbyshire DE73 7LE. Tel: 01332 863822. Visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk).

**EXHIBITION** Hopped Up by fine-art photographer David Biene, until 11 April at Proud Camden, the Horse Hospital, Stables Market, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 8AH. Tel: 0207 482 3867. Visit [www.proudcamden.com](http://www.proudcamden.com).



© DAVID BIENE

Friday 19 March



© JUDITH LYONS

**EXHIBITION** A Different Nature: An Exhibition of Cameraless Photographs by London College of Communication graduate Judith Lyons, until 2 April at Gallery 1885, The Camera Club, 16 Bowden St, London SE11 4DS. Tel: 0207 587 1809. Visit [www.judithlyonsphotography.co.uk](http://www.judithlyonsphotography.co.uk).

**EXHIBITION** and sale of work by photographer Adrian Oakes, until 22 March at A La Ronde, Summer Lane, Exmouth, Devon EX8 5BD. Tel: 01395 265 514. Visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk).

Saturday 20 March

**EXHIBITION** Beyond the Boundary explores relationship between 'cricket, culture, class and politics', until 12 September at International Slavery Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AX. Tel: 0151 478 4499. Visit [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk).

**EXHIBITION** Shaped by War: Photographs by Don McCullin, until 13 June at Imperial War Museum North, Manchester M17 1TZ. Tel: 0161 836 4000. Visit [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk).

Sunday 21 March

**EXHIBITION** Rock 'n' Roll Animals by Sophie Jarry, until 21 March at Proud Camden, London NW1 8AH. Tel: 0207 482 3867. Visit [www.proud.co.uk](http://www.proud.co.uk).

**EXHIBITION** Paris je t'aime: Photography by Ivan Massar, until 28 March at Proud Chelsea, London SW1 5XP. Tel: 0207 349 0822. Visit [www.proud.co.uk](http://www.proud.co.uk).

Monday 22 March

**EXHIBITION** by Malick Sidibé, until 1 April at the Lichfield Studios, London W10 6NE. Tel: 0208 969 6161. **EXHIBITION** Rob Munro, until 31 March at Rhubarb & Custard Photo Gallery, Berkshire SL4 6AS. Tel: 01753 676 404. Visit [www.rhubarbandcustard.biz](http://www.rhubarbandcustard.biz).

Tuesday 23 March **LATEST AP ON SALE**

**EXHIBITION** Simon Roberts: We English, until 5 September at the National Media Museum, West Yorkshire BD1 1NQ. Tel: 0870 701 0200. Visit [www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk](http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk). **EXHIBITION** Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2010, until 18 April at The Photographers' Gallery, London W1F 7LW. Tel: 0845 262 1618. Visit [www.photonet.org.uk](http://www.photonet.org.uk).

Row erupts after man takes photo of son

## PARENTS FACE BAN ON PICS OF OWN KIDS

**AP RIGHTS WATCH**

Committed to defending your photographic rights!

**PARENTS**

should expect to be quizzed when taking photographs

of their own children at a Sunderland shopping centre.

Bosses at the Bridges Shopping Centre in Sunderland have not ruled out future questioning of parents following a row that broke out when a security guard reportedly banned a father from taking pictures of his own son, telling the man he could have been a paedophile.

Kevin Geraghty-Shewan had taken a photo of his four-year-old son playing on a train ride.

The incident sparked further questioning of the man by a police officer who arrived at the scene shortly afterwards.

Kevin told *Sky News*: 'I took a picture on my phone and suddenly this security guard came up and told me it wasn't allowed because I could be a paedophile... A few minutes later a policeman walked in and approached me so they must have been tracking me on CCTV.'

Kevin said the police officer then asked him to delete his pictures and demanded his name and address.

However, by law, police do not have the

right to delete someone's pictures without a court order.

Centre bosses admitted to *Amateur Photographer* that there were no signs warning visitors that photography will be monitored.

A spokeswoman for the centre's owner, Land Securities, denied that the guard had mentioned the word 'paedophile', claiming that the father had become angry following a 'polite' conversation.

She said the guard had 'fulfilled his duties as instructed' and would not need retraining on the way he approaches future visitors.

'The situation was dealt with correctly,' she added.

In a statement, Land Securities said: 'We take the safety at all of our shopping centres very seriously. We do ask our security guards across the estate to be diligent in implementing our security measures, which includes monitoring photography in our centres.'

'Unfortunately on this occasion, what should have been a simple, polite conversation led to a misunderstanding and we apologise for any offence caused. It is always our aim to implement our security procedures with the minimum of fuss and disruption to our shoppers.'



Lumix G10 is pared-down G2

## PANASONIC UNWRAPS 'ENTRY-LEVEL' G CAMERA

**ALONGSIDE** its Lumix DMC-G2 (see page 5), Panasonic unveiled an 'entry-level' model called the Lumix DMC-G10. Unlike the G2, the 12.1MP G10 features a fixed 3in LCD monitor (460,000-dot resolution) and Motion JPEG-only movie recording (the G2 includes AVCHD movie capability).

The G10 also lacks the ability to shoot a still image when recording video and does not have the option to attach an external stereo microphone.

This pared-down version of the G2 does not include Touch AF/AE.

The G10 is expected to sell for under

£500 (including 14-42mm lens).

In an interview with AP, Panasonic's DSC products planning manager Michiharu Uematsu said the firm instructed its factory in China to make a cheaper lens than the current 14-45mm zoom.

The new 14-42mm optic is said to be lighter than Panasonic's current offering.

We understand the Panasonic is poised to expand its Micro Four Thirds lens range to include a 'fisheye' lens due to debut in the summer.

This will be followed by a 100-300mm telezoom and a 14mm f/2.5 optic.



## SNAP SHOTS

● A Government bill some fear will adversely affect photography copyright when it becomes law has reached a crucial stage in the House of Lords. Professional photographers are concerned that the Digital Economy Bill will give members of the public the right to use images for free and without permission. The bill, which is expected to become law before the General Election, would make changes to the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. The controversy centres on 'orphan works', a term that refers to copyrighted materials whose owner cannot be identified or traced. Photographers fear that the Digital Economy Bill would make it much simpler for images to be used, legally, without the consent of the copyright owner. Keep an eye on AP's News pages for more details.

● Alongside Sony's unnamed, mocked-up version of an Alpha 700 successor, on show at PMA in the US was a smaller concept camera that appeared to have a flip-up LCD screen. Prototypes of a 500mm f/4 G lens and a new Carl Zeiss Distagon T 24mm f/2 ZA SSM optic were also on display.



**Do you have a story?**

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## Digital alteration spotted WORLD PRESS PRIZE WINNER DISQUALIFIED

**WORLD** Press Photo judges have disqualified one of this year's competition winners after he was deemed to have digitally altered his image.

Judges disqualified Stepan Rudik, winner of the third prize story in Sports Features.

Rudik has since admitted that he had digitally removed part of a foot belonging to a person seen in the background of one of the images he had entered.

The Ukrainian photographer had submitted a series of b&w photos entitled 'Street fighting, Kiev, Ukraine'.

'After requesting raw files of the series from him, it became clear that an element had been removed from one of the original photographs,' said organisers.

Competition rules state that the content of an image must not be altered and that only retouching that conforms to currently

accepted industry standards is allowed.

Judges ruled that Rudik 'ventured beyond the boundary of what is acceptable practice'.

In a bid to defend his reputation as a 'reportage photographer', Rudik told us that he does not dispute the jury's decision. But he added: 'It is clear that I haven't made a significant alteration or removed any important informative detail.'

'The photograph I submitted is a crop and the retouched detail is the foot of a man that appears in the original photograph, but who is not a subject of the image submitted to the contest' (see pictures above).

World Press Photo managing director Michiel Munneke said: 'The principle of



**Judges stripped Rudik of his award. He accepts the decision, but argues that his digital removal of the background foot (seen below the fighter's hand) did not significantly alter the photograph**

the World Press Photo is to promote high standards in photojournalism. Therefore, we must maintain the integrity of our organisation even when the outcome is regrettable.'

For the full statement visit [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk).

## NMM chief 'disappointed' VISITORS DROP AT THE NATIONAL PHOTO MUSEUM

**THE NATIONAL** Media Museum has expressed disappointment after visitor numbers fell 18% last year compared to the year before.

The drop comes despite a 10.9% overall rise in visitors to UK attractions, according to figures released by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions.

The museum, which is based in Bradford, West Yorkshire, pulled in 613,923 visitors in 2009.

Bosses attributed the downturn to 'stay-at-home holidaymakers' shunning the museum in favour of destinations such as the coast and nearby cities like York.

The NMM's director Colin Philpott said: 'Maintaining growth in visitor numbers is a challenge for an attraction and we have not had a major new gallery opening since the Experience TV in 2006.'

He added: 'Important as visitor numbers are, the museum is doing extremely well in terms of other

measures of success. Survey results say that our visitor satisfaction rates remain consistently high.'

Considered to be Britain's flagship photography institution, the NMM holds an historic collection of photographs, including the oldest surviving negative created by British photography inventor William Henry Fox Talbot.

Last year, the NMM appointed a creative director for its 'future London Galleries'. It said the move would bring its exhibitions and collection to a 'wider audience'.

It added: 'Disclosing the venue at this stage could jeopardise the project. We hope to be in a position to open in 2011/12, subject to fundraising and Government approval.'



## Professionals eclipsed AMATEUR TRIUMPHS IN RHS PHOTO CONTEST

**AN AMATEUR** photographer has triumphed over professionals to scoop the 2009 RHS Photographic Competition title.

Linda Wride from Oxford beat 2,000 other entries with an image taken at her local allotments as part of a project called Cultivating Communities.

'The poppies, verbasum and alchemilla jostle for space outside the greenhouse where tomatoes are thriving in the warmth,' said Linda, who has only been taking photography seriously since 2007.

Linda told AP she was thrilled when she heard of her triumph.

'I was a category winner last year, so I was hopeful I would win something this year. But to be the overall winner was beyond my wildest dreams.'

Meanwhile, the RHS Young Photographer of the Year title was awarded to Tom Flathers, 18, from Upper Sepey.

Linda has pledged to donate her £1,000 winnings to her local Allotments Association.

The 2010 contest opens on 1 April.

To view the 2009 winners visit [www.rhs.org.uk/competitions.photo-competition](http://www.rhs.org.uk/competitions.photo-competition).



AP  
THIS  
WEEK  
IN...

1893

A clever deception seemingly led to the alleged appearance of ghosts in 'psychic photographs' that had recently been investigated by Traill Taylor, editor of the *British Journal of Photography*. Taylor had been invited to a house to photograph two gentlemen. 'Ordinary dry plates of the well-known brand Ilford were bought at a dealer's in the ordinary way,' stated AP. 'These plates were not unsealed except by Mr Taylor, who, using a stereoscopic camera, filled the dark slides that never left his possession until the plates had been exposed and taken out and developed, when "ghosts" or "spooks" appeared in the negatives...' However, AP's article later pointed out that the ghostly pictures were captured in a darkened room with the blinds drawn, adding: 'This, we must confess, does not satisfy us and is, we consider, a weak point at which trickery and chicanery may come in.'



## SNAP SHOTS

● A Croydon-based camera shop is celebrating 50 years in business. High Street Radio and Photographic was founded in 1959 by Reg Roach, the current owner. Loyal fans include Leica Camera Ltd managing director David Bell, who said: 'Reg assisted my photographic development, directing me towards street photography and helping me with equipment. I recall one particular instance when I had purchased a second-hand 90mm f/2 Canadian Leica lens elsewhere, only to find that it was loose mid-barrel. Reg showed me how the lens could adapt to Leica R-system use and secured the lens for me. It is detailed knowledge such as this that sets Reg apart.'

● A self-taught photographer eclipsed professionals to win a major portrait prize in Australia. Scott Bycroft, a 37-year-old teacher from Perth, won the country's National Photographic Portrait Prize. 'I was surprised to be selected as a finalist. I just about fell off my chair,' said Scott, who only began taking photography seriously a couple of years ago.

Plans to produce film are delayed

## POLAROID REVIVAL PLAN IN JEOPARDY

**PLANS** to remake instant film that is compatible with traditional Polaroid cameras have been delayed.

In 2008, Polaroid announced plans to axe its instant film, blaming the digital photography revolution.

Then, Netherlands firm Impossible BV stepped in with a plan to revive production of instant films using Polaroid's plant in Enschede.

However, Impossible BV admitted that the firm has 'encountered a problem with one of the components vital to production'.

In a statement, Impossible BV said: 'On 22 March 2010, they [the project's leaders] will discuss whether or not their Impossible Project will be possible.'

'At that time they will present the status of their work, their plans and their products, publicly in New York.'

It is not clear which component has triggered the crisis. Last October, Polaroid licensee, the Summit Global Group, revealed plans to relaunch some of

Polaroid's most famous instant film cameras. At the time, Polaroid said it would once again manufacture a range of classic instant film products 'like the Polaroid 600' instant film, and a range of instant cameras to use with them, including the Polaroid One.

Impossible BV was commissioned to develop and produce a limited number of Polaroid-branded films in the middle of 2010. This was in addition to the Impossible Project's own brand of instant film, production of which was due to begin early this year.

Last year, Ilford told us that it had successfully produced the photosensitive components for a 'b&w' film and was in talks with Impossible BV over its commercialisation.



## CANON EOS 550D: WHY THE NEW BATTERY?

**SAFETY** laws required Canon to redesign the battery used to power its EOS 550D DSLR after fears over exploding rechargeable batteries, AP has learned.

Canon's EOS 550D uses an LPE8 battery, which is different from the one used on previous models and therefore necessitated production of a new mains power adapter.

A Canon spokeswoman explained that the firm was obliged to comply with Japan's Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law, which came into effect in November 2008. Under the regulations, the voltage per electrical cell is limited to 2.5 volts, although the overall power of the battery is not affected, according to Canon.

The law was introduced to 'prevent hazards and disturbances resulting from electrical appliances', according to the website of Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

There is no suggestion, however, that previous Canon batteries have caused any problems.

The EOS 550D is an 18-million-pixel DSLR boasting 'Full HD' video and 'semi-professional' features. See next week's issue for a full test of the EOS 550D.



## CLUBNEWS

Club news from around the country

### DANSON AND DISTRICT AMATEUR CAMERA CLUB

Club members will exhibit their work from 1 April-2 May at the Austen Gallery, Hall Place and Gardens, Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 1PQ. Tel: 01322 526 574.

### PADIHAM AND DISTRICT PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The society will stage its annual exhibition of 50 framed prints from 27 March-29 April at Towneley Hall Museum, Towneley Park, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3RQ. It is due to be opened by the Mayor of Burnley. Tel: 01282 424 213 (venue). For exhibition details call Bob Rawlinson on 07816 171 152.

### SMETHWICK PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

An exhibition takes place at the Old Schoolhouse, Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2AS from 31 July-12 August. Tel: 0121 552 0279.



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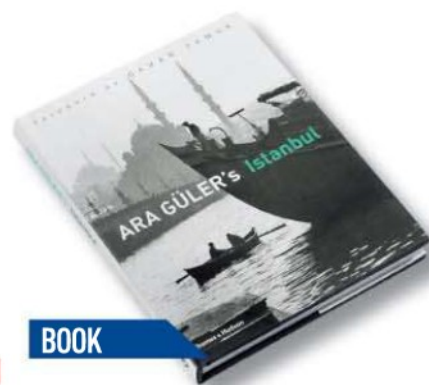
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# APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jeff Meyer



BOOK

## Ara Güler's Istanbul

By Ara Güler

Thames & Hudson, hardback, 184 pages, £32, ISBN 978-0-500-54386-3



**PERHAPS** Turkey's greatest photographer, Ara Güler made his name as a photojournalist for

*Life*, *Paris Match* and *Der Stern*, through which he photographed countless luminaries of the middle of the last century. *Istanbul* is the photographer's record of daily life in the Turkish capital from the 1940s until the 1980s.

Güler's rich duotones, with their striking depth of field, show a city changing from the old pre-war ways of the caliphate to an industrialising nation embracing the European lifestyles west of the Bosphorus. Trams and automobiles replace horse traffic on the city's cobblestone streets. Fashions become more Western in style. Most strikingly, Istanbul's fishermen, who seem to be a favourite subject of Güler's, dwindle in the emergence of large fishing vessels. Güler's body of work asks the age-old questions about progress and innocence, and ultimately leaves it up to the viewer to decide which is more important to society.



© ARA GÜLER

Photograph flowers outside using natural sunlight

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**IF YOU** have considered submitting images to a stock library to supplement your income, or even if you just want to take a stand-out photo for an eBay auction, TableTopStudio should be your first for tips on how to take successful product shots. The site's experts offer specifically tailored advice for shooting clothing, coins, glass, jewellery, flowers, beads and even

showing objects three dimensionally.

Techniques run from the basic (for example, eliminating shadows and creating white backgrounds in Photoshop) to more advanced practices, such as creating halo effects on jewellery or soft reflections with watches. The articles are detailed, clearly explained and illustrated every step of the way. What's more, there is a store selling affordable diffusers, reflectors and other equipment to help get you started.





## EXHIBITION



© 2009 DAVID DUNNICO

**Reality TV: CCTV**

Photographed by David Dunnico  
Until 27 March. Mezzanine Gallery, Royal Exchange Theatre, St Ann's Square,  
Manchester M2 7DH. Tel: 0161 833 9833. Website: [www.royalexchangetheatre.org.uk](http://www.royalexchangetheatre.org.uk). Open Mon-Sat 9.30am-7.30pm. Admission free

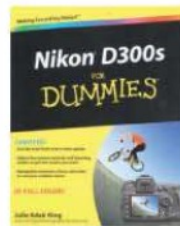
**WHILE** this country was sleepwalking into a surveillance society and it suddenly became suspicious to carry a camera around, AP reader David Dunnico decided enough was enough and turned his own camera back on the authorities. For several years now the Mancunian has been taking pictures of the surreptitious lenses spying on us from the eaves of buildings, car parks and upper corners of supermarkets.

This series of 31 urban images documents

what David calls the 'hoodies of the surveillance society, the companies who sell it and the people who oppose it.' Each picture has been printed at 20x24in by Ilford Photo, and David also had support from Olympus, which loaned him an E-3 camera and a 7-14mm lens. David's graphic, black & white series mixes humour with a political statement and ultimately concludes that Big Brother probably isn't watching you, but your supermarket definitely is.

# CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



## ● NIKON D300S FOR DUMMIES

by Julie Adair King, £21.99 The 'Dummies' series, by its sheer volume of titles, is a bit hit and miss, and this paradox seems to have afflicted this latest instalment. While the writing has more depth than you'd expect in a book 'for Dummies', it must be said that the pictures do not do the D300S justice. It's quite distracting. ● **INDIA EXPOSED**



The Subcontinent A-Z, by Clive Limpkin, £20 There are innumerable photo books about India these days, and the 'A-Z' format has been done to death. Still, Limpkin takes this worn subject and makes something fresh and appealing. Cheery images and thought-provoking text make this certainly worth a peek. ● **A BEAUTIFUL GAME**



Football through the eyes of the world's greatest players, by Tom Watt, £19.95 To make this unique collaborative project, football writer Tom Watt interviewed the world's top footballers about how they fell in love with the game as children. Interspersed are some 130 colour images showing children watching, playing and celebrating the sport, as well as dramatic action shots of the footballers themselves. Essential for any football fan. ● **THE NOIR A-Z**



by Julian Hibbard, £14.95 How good is your 'BS Detector'? Hibbard's cryptic book is a sexy, voyeuristic trip through the alphabet, starting with 'A is for Abandoned' and a low-light shot of an abandoned car, all the way to 'Z is for Zoomorphic' and a white-gloved arm on a white, frilly duvet – which would work if you didn't have to look up what 'zoomorphic' means and the arm on the duvet actually looked like an animal. 'N' is for nonsense.

**London At Night**

By Jason Hawkes  
Merrell, hardback,  
160 pages, £24.95,  
ISBN 978-1-8589-4517-0



**JASON** Hawkes is undoubtedly the king of British aerial photography, and with a

name like that it was probably predestined that he would be. His previous releases, such as *Britain from Above* in 2008, have shown us views of this country that we haven't seen before, and in his latest book Jason sets his sights on the capital.

The problem with aerial night-time photography, however, is that it can get a bit samey. Big dramatic sweeps of lights are just that before they start to blend together. The best aerial photography emphasises the patterns and shapes in the landscape or zooms in for a more detailed look at certain subjects. Jason has done this, singling out football stadiums, Waterloo Station and buildings around Canary Wharf for a closer look. Ultimately, though, this isn't enough. It doesn't feel like there is enough variety here. That said, the double-page spreads showing the vast road networks and blur of traffic are some of the most dramatic images we've ever seen from Jason.



© JASON HAWKES



# Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card\*



FUJIFILM

### THE ATTRACTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Finally, last Sunday, I heard the evidence that I needed for continuing with my all-absorbing hobby. While sitting at breakfast with my wife, an item came on the radio about a poll that had rated the hobbies that are most attractive to the opposite sex. Sitting through the countdown, fingers crossed in eager anticipation, you can imagine my surprise when photography was listed as one of the top five hobbies that women like a man to have, coming in just behind football and other more 'manly' pursuits. I feel totally vindicated and can now justify gear expenditure, hours out picture taking and time in front of the computer as fully in line with the wishes of the female population of the UK.

Neil Harris, Greater London

## Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3) fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateur photographer @ipcmedia.com

\*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

## Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

details...' I'm sending a small print on A4 paper with large borders off to be framed.  
Tom Frost, London SE10

### DIGITAL DILEMMA

I have been a Contax/Carl Zeiss user for almost 30 years, and what I now see as unfortunate was that I changed to the autofocus N system in December 2004, just four months before Contax announced that all equipment was to be discontinued. I obviously would have made a different decision had I known this. Due to the mount change and larger filter sizes of the N system, I had to sell all my existing photographic equipment, which meant an expensive change-over process. However, I am happy with the results, and use the 17-35mm, 50mm, 100mm macro and 70-300mm lenses with N1, NX and N Digital bodies.

In the past five years I have seen a big

shift towards digital imaging – nobody uses film at my camera club, for example, which makes it difficult for me to enter competitions due to the time taken to get a good-quality clean scan from a slide. Also, my film scanner (a Nikon Coolscan 5000) and Metz SCA-3802 flash adapters have recently been discontinued, and the choice of films is getting less. My dilemma, therefore, is do I change to a digital camera?

I want to change to a system with equal optical quality that is going to be around for a while. This leaves me with two options: Canon or Nikon, and Carl Zeiss makes lenses for both of them. However, I am not happy with either the D700 or the EOS 5D Mark II, which are the only two models I see as suitable. So I am waiting to see what comes out at photokina 2010 – unless somebody can help with this decision.  
Colin Bradford, West Yorkshire

The cameras you mention, Colin, both have bigger brothers that represent the pinnacle of current standards. However, photokina does have the power to change everything – Damien Demolder, Editor

### SENTIMENTAL VALUE

I read Roger Hicks' comments in his column in AP 27 February: 'What really puzzles me is why some people "baby" cameras that aren't even rare and expensive, and which will decline in value'. It is obvious to me that Mr Hicks has overlooked a value that money cannot buy, namely sentimental value. Many will keep the very first 'real' camera they bought, just because it was the first one and they don't want to part with it.

Peter Sheldrake, Limassol, Cyprus

### WHERE WILL IT ALL END?

With Canon having announced the 18-million-pixel EOS 550D, it has confirmed that the megapixel war isn't over and that the previous EOS 500D's 15.1 million pixels weren't enough. It worries me that manufacturers insist on pushing the pixel count way beyond a sensible limit, and that they intend to sell cameras on the basis that megapixels are the be-all and end-all of image quality. Nikon is happy with 12 million pixels for most of its DSLRs, and even the £4,000 Canon EOS-1D Mark IV gets only a 'mere' 16 million pixels.

Photos taken with my 12-million-pixel EOS 450D print very well up to 11x16in (which equates to a resolution of 258ppi) and are very sharp even with this level of enlargement. As printers just throw away the extra pixels, what purpose do they serve? The majority of users of this class of camera will never print pictures to this size anyway.

The more pixels a manufacturer fits onto a sensor, the smaller those pixels must be. This means more noise is generated as their weaker signals are amplified, and this is especially evident at higher ISO settings. The consequence is more noise at these settings, or stronger noise reduction to blur it out (and detail along with it).



### SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Thank you for your very kind words about my photo of Greenwich Park in *Appraisal*, AP 6 March (see above). I recently bought an A3 printer and printed the photo at A3 with a view to framing it, but for some reason the result did not turn out how I expected. Damien Demolder hit the nail on the head when he said, 'As the picture is small, we can't see all those little distracting

## What The Duck





## APPEAL AND IMPACT ARE WHAT MATTER

From personal experience, I would like to reassure the writer of AP 27 February's letter of the week, as well as anyone else with similar doubts, that a wealth of photographic equipment is not essential for success, even in highly regarded competitions such as AP's Amateur Photographer of the Year.

I thought I might be at a disadvantage when I entered my first competition, the International Garden Photographer of the Year (I wonder if AP Editor Damien Demolder, as one of the judges, remembers my entry?) as I had used my Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ5, which was neither a DSLR nor anywhere near the most recent model in the range. However, this did not prevent one shot from winning second prize in the People in the Garden category. Interestingly, the shot was taken in my own garden, demonstrating that the subject need not be sophisticated, either. The appeal and impact of the image are what truly matter.

Most cameras have their strengths, and I believe that getting really familiar with one over a length of time helps to exploit these in a creative way. However, if there is any chance that you might use them for competitions, do take shots at maximum quality. This may seem obvious, but my winning shot was a JPEG before I even contemplated entering any competitions. The small file size, particularly after any editing, could have presented problems for larger reproduction. I subsequently swapped to shooting TIFF files to be on the safe side, and can now shoot in raw format as my cash prize contributed to my new Panasonic Lumix DMC-G1.

The added interest generated by participation in a competition, and the sense of achievement and encouragement from any degree of success, cannot be overestimated.

**Maggie Lambert,  
West Yorkshire**

**Of course I remember  
it, Maggie – Damien  
Demolder, Editor**



We also know that most lenses (especially kit lenses) do not have the resolving capabilities to take advantage of the extra pixels we are forced to have. A chain is as strong as its weakest link, and in most cases this is actually the lens.

As a keen sports photographer, I would be much happier to see Canon develop the autofocus system instead. I note that the EOS 550D still has only nine focus points and that only one of these is a cross-type sensor, so that means Canon has not improved its autofocus system since the EOS 450D.

It is time that manufacturers started to focus on improving components that enable us to take better photographs rather than pushing megapixels. Where will it all end? Will they just keep adding another three million pixels to every new model until the whole image becomes just a mass of noise?

**Michael Kay, Lancashire**

**You can't stop progress, Mr Kay. As pixel counts increase, so does the ability of noise-avoidance science, optical resolutions and even printing technology – Damien Demolder, Editor**

## TIME TO GIVE UP?

A situation arose recently while I was out with my 35mm film SLR. Having read some articles on street photography I decided to give it a go. In a busy outdoor shopping precinct, I raised the camera to my eye to judge the light quality and the scene. It was not ideal, so I changed position and tried

again. Still no joy, so I decided to go home. I spent less than 30 minutes in the precinct.

That evening, I received a visit at my home from a police officer who interviewed me as to my movements during the day. Apparently, the police received a report from someone who alleged that I had been taking several photographs of children. I was not aware of any myself! In fact, I took no shots that day, and when I showed the officer my camera, complete with the brand new roll of unexposed film she went away happy. I have no complaints about her – she was, after all, responding to a serious complaint. However, there are lessons to be learned.

Don't think you might only be stopped by police or security; you could well be followed to your car and have your registration taken by a member of the public – as in my case.

Digital cameras attract more hostility than film, perhaps because of the former's convenience of use for illegal purposes. Unfortunately, though, all photographers seem to be tarred with the same brush and branded as perverts or terrorists.

I know it's usually OK to take pictures in a public place subject to certain restrictions, but with so many 'ponderables' and having to constantly look over one's shoulder, I'm seriously contemplating giving it all up.

**P Carey, Hampshire**

**Don't give in to the bad people,  
whatever you do, and I hope you made  
the nice WPC a cup of tea – Damien  
Demolder, Editor**

# BACK CHAT

## AP reader Jachin Mandeno realises that old dogs can learn new tricks

**IT'S NOT** true what they say, for I am the old dog who learnt a new trick. I'll tell you about my new trick later, but first I'll tell you about my old trick.

I started out in photography with single-lens and twin-lens cameras, where the only electronics involved in actually taking a photo were my brain, a handheld lightmeter and possibly a flashgun or two. Automation only came into it when a flashgun had a little sensor on the front: this received the light reflected by the subject and the flash turned itself off after the subject had received a sufficient number of photons.

When a dog has grown up learning tricks like that, it's a shock to acquire a camera with face detection, as I recently did. I thought that this was a useless gimmick and set the autofocus to centre, grateful that I no longer had to rely upon my unsharp eyes for focusing. Then one day I was taking some formal portraits of a group that included a number of very small people. Keeping these children interested and looking at the camera was a challenge, and I started to feel like a one-armed paper hanger, what with a squeaky toy occupying one hand and the other trying to operate the camera. (In this case it's true what they say: never work with children and other small animals).

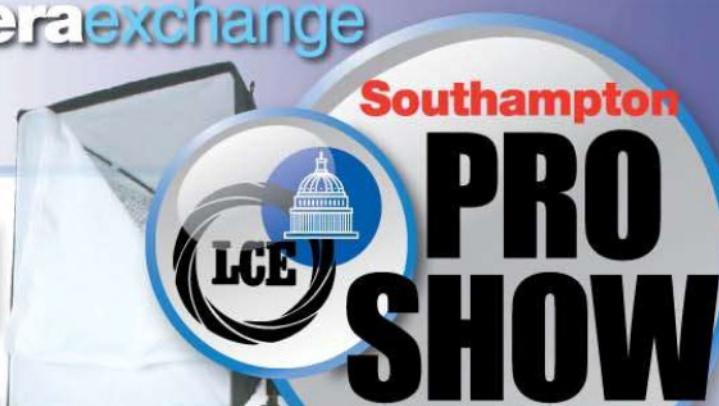
Then I remembered the face-recognition feature that was hidden inside my new-fangled box of electronics. I turned it on. It was marvellous. It picked up each face in the group and focused on it, tracking the (small) faces that moved, and putting a green box around individual faces so that I knew everything was working as it should. My workload and stress levels reduced immediately. The useless gimmick turned out to be a jolly useful gimmick. If I'd had a dedicated flash instead of my ancient one with a sensor on the front, the automatic exposure system would have taken a particular interest in the faces as well, but I haven't yet taken modernity that far.

After I'd recovered from the trauma of photographing those children, I reflected on the fact that some of these seemingly useless modern innovations really do have their uses, and resolved to use face detection when doing future portraits. So long as I still have the centre autofocus option I'm happy, and woe betide any camera manufacturer that won't let me turn off the gimmicks and focus on the object of my choice.

Old dogs really can learn new tricks, but equally I cannot imagine myself using Smile Shutter, which requires people to look like they've taken an illegal substance before the camera will fire. Will those be my famous last words?



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# Andy Rouse@AP

Thoughts from a wildlife photographer's world



**SNIFE** (*Gallinago gallinago*) are medium-sized wading birds with long, straight bills and short legs. They are

found on freshwater marshes, flooded fields and boggy heaths, and use their long bills to probe deep into soft mud as they search for small invertebrates, including worms and insect larvae. In winter they are also found on salt marshes and saline lagoons.

Snipe are around 25-27cm (9½-10½in) in size and both sexes have a brown back that is streaked with chestnut, buff and black, a pale belly, and a rounded tail with white on the margins. They can be seen all year round in flocks from 1-100 and are widespread as a breeding species in the UK, particularly in the northern uplands with lower numbers in south-west England. According to the RSPB, there are an estimated 100,000 overwintering snipe in the UK.

When disturbed, snipe often call on taking flight, producing a harsh 'scarp' sound. They nest in a lined hollow on the ground, and during the breeding season males can be seen performing their 'drumming' or 'bleating' display.



**ANDY ROUSE** is one of the world's most prominent wildlife photographers and a passionate

conservationist – two roles that go hand in hand as far as he is concerned. A professional photographer for more than ten years, Andy has worked in every corner of the planet and photographed everything from ladybirds to elephants. He has a dozen books to his name and regularly appears on TV. He has also won multiple wildlife photography awards.

In this weekly column, Andy recounts some of his experiences, shares his thoughts and highlights issues from the wildlife world. You can see his work at [www.andyrouse.co.uk](http://www.andyrouse.co.uk) and read his blog at [www.andyrouse.co.uk/blog.asp](http://www.andyrouse.co.uk/blog.asp). You can even become a fan and keep up to date with 'Andy Rouse Wildlife Photography' on Facebook.

## On capturing an elusive object of desire in the field

### HUNTING OF THE SNIPE



**WILDLIFE** photography is an obsession for me.

Over the years I have concentrated on some very difficult species. I'm not just talking about big, bold or hard-to-find exotic animals, but also British creatures – black grouse, hares, roe deer and badgers, to name but a few.

However, one species, the common snipe, had eluded me for years, but now I have finally nailed it. At first glance the snipe is not overly colourful and it rarely does more than shove its considerable beak in the mud. A closer look, though, reveals the snipe as a beautiful bird, with stunning markings and a very elegant manner. However, its attraction for me lies in its elusive nature, because it is more often heard than seen and is therefore a big challenge.

Of course, there are a few public hides I could sit in and get record shots of snipe, but I want more. I like to be totally in control, to do all the fieldcraft bit myself, build my own hide and control the light and angles.

I guess I just want to feel a sense of achievement, because for me this is as important as the shot itself.

Fortunately, a farmer friend in mid-Wales has built a wetland where snipe have started to visit. So with my friend 'Welsh James' helping me, I set up one of my hides on a pool where I had seen the snipe feeding and left it there for a few days to let the birds get used to it.

I was in the hide pre-dawn, and in the darkness I set up in silence as the snipe were roosting nearby. Then it was just a waiting game, sitting still and keeping my mind focused. In the low light my Nikon D3S was ready, set to ISO 2000, motordrive on 'quiet' mode and tracking AF.

Hours passed and still I waited. All was silent, and then I saw movement in the reeds. A snipe appeared. It was



© ANDY ROUSE

incredible. Heading towards me was a species I had only dreamt about photographing. I kept my emotions in check – I have always been able to be very cool when shooting – and checked my basics. With the focus point right over the bird's eye I tracked the motion slowly. It all came together in one brief second so I took the shot and, then, after a pause, another, hardly daring to breathe. The snipe moved on until it was out of sight and I felt elated at what I had seen.

All in all, I spent a further 11 sessions of four or more hours in the hide and managed only two or three more images of any note, such is the difficulty of the snipe. Yet these few photographs mean more to me than any African shots I have taken, as they show one of our most captivating birds. Now it's time to turn my attention to woodcock... **AP**





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# PHOTO INSIGHT



## TOM MACKIE

As an internationally respected architectural photographer, Tom brings a wealth of experience to AP

**When light, shape and perspective come together it is possible to produce fantastic images. Tom Mackie explains how, when he saw these towering skyscrapers, he knew there was a shot to be had**

**I HAD** been on a shoot in New England in the USA and had stopped in Boston when I saw this scene. I'd been looking for skyline shots and the clear reflection in the water caught my eye. When I'm searching for architectural scenes to photograph, I tend to look for buildings that are lit in interesting ways or areas with strong foregrounds that I can include in my shot, such as sculptures, pools of water, fountains and bridges. In fact, I look for anything that leads the eye to the buildings behind or that enhances the overall composition.

When you're confronted with a scene with many different elements – vertical lines, diagonal lines, intersecting lines, rectangular blocks – you have to think carefully about what you are trying to achieve. What do you want to make the most of in the frame, and what do you have to include and exclude to achieve this? Are you shooting a skyline, a cluster of buildings or focusing on a single structure? If there is lots going on, it may be better to isolate one building rather than photograph the entire skyline.

It is tempting to try to fit everything into the frame, especially if there are lots of interesting things going on, but it's better not to include too much in a composition, otherwise an image can look overcrowded.

When I arrived at this location, I walked down the length of the pool to see where the most interesting features were. When I got to this end I thought, 'That's it; that's the shot'.

I took this image on a Hasselblad medium-format camera, the system I was using at the time. Now that I am predominantly using a digital system, I'm selling a lot of my old equipment because I get the same quality from my Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera. I don't want to carry around excess weight if I don't have to, and I find this camera convenient to transport.

I didn't have a shift lens to help me keep the verticals straight, so I had to keep the camera level. With a shift lens you can adjust it to fit all a building in the frame and it helps to avoid converging verticals caused by angling the camera upwards. Although I was using a 50mm optic all was not lost. The pool of water created a strong foreground, so I decided to make the most of it in my shot.

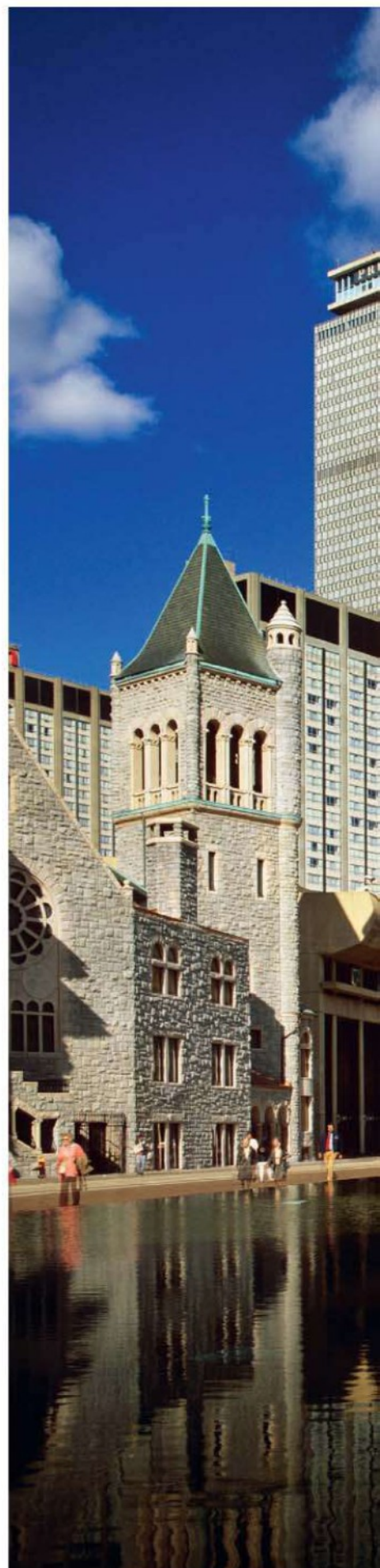
On a medium-format camera, a 50mm lens is fairly wide, so setting my camera on a tripod on the edge of the pool, I made the reflection a prominent feature in the composition. It was crucial to ensure the reflections were completely still, otherwise the composition wouldn't have been as strong. The pool enhances perspective here, drawing the eye into the centre and up the sides of the skyscrapers. The people on the left provide a sense of scale and the buildings look even more imposing when you notice the tiny figures sauntering below.

The lighting is also important. The shadows on the buildings created by this contrasty light make the structures look three-dimensional. I took this shot late morning and the sky was really crisp and the clouds fluffy and white. The period between 10am and noon is a great time to shoot architecture, and if the light is right and you are in the right position you can get perfect polarisation.

The sun is to my right in this shot, and the light hits the buildings at a right angle – it's almost a front sidelight. Usually, I'll pinpoint an area I want to photograph beforehand and work out where I need to stand so the light falls on the subject in the way I want. I tend to position myself so my shots are side-lit – this helps polarisation, but I also used a polarising filter to bring out the clouds and sky. The Fujichrome Velvia film I was using helped to make the colours more vivid. **AP**

*Tom Mackie was talking to Gemma Padley*

When you use a tripod to photograph a scene where there is water or fast-moving clouds, try using ND filters and a longer exposure to capture some of the movement. For scenes with a lot of cloud, you could use a 10 or 13-stop ND filter with a polariser to give an exposure of several minutes, which will allow you to show the clouds rushing through the sky. If you can slow down your exposure you can create a velvety quality in the water and still any surface ripples. On this occasion, even though I was using a small aperture, my exposure wouldn't have been slower than 1/4sec, so I was limited in the amount of movement I could show. Consequently, this technique is most effective in the late evening or early morning when light levels are lower. Nevertheless, it is a technique you can experiment with in an urban setting if there is water or a dramatic sky.



To see more images by Tom visit [www.tommackie.com](http://www.tommackie.com)

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**SOFTWARE USED**

Adobe Photoshop CS4, Photomatrix Pro

**SKILL LEVEL** ■■■■■

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If the skies are grey, don't despair: try your hand at shooting gritty, contrasty black & white HDR images. **Chris Gatcum** shows you how

# Black & white HDR

**IF YOU** go outdoors to take pictures, the one thing you have very little control over is the weather. This was the problem I faced when I visited New York for the first time.

The Empire State Building was high on my list of 'tourist hotspots' to check out, but as I stepped out onto the 86th Floor Observatory,

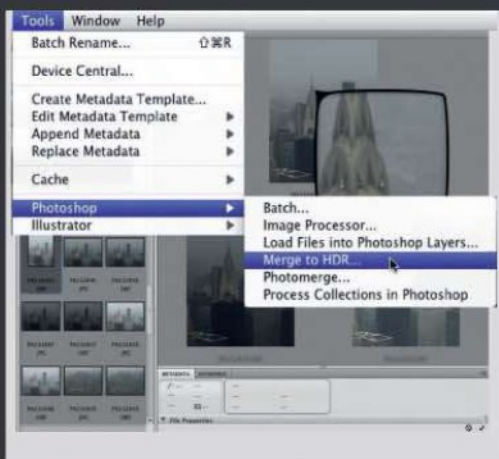
the skies were grey and the wind drove the rain incessantly. I decided to play the waiting game, but the clouds refused to break. There was only one thing for it: to shoot bracketed sequences of raw files that I could combine and tone-map into gritty, contrasty, black & white HDR images that reflected both the weather and attitude of NYC.

## WHY CREATE THE HDR IN PHOTOSHOP?

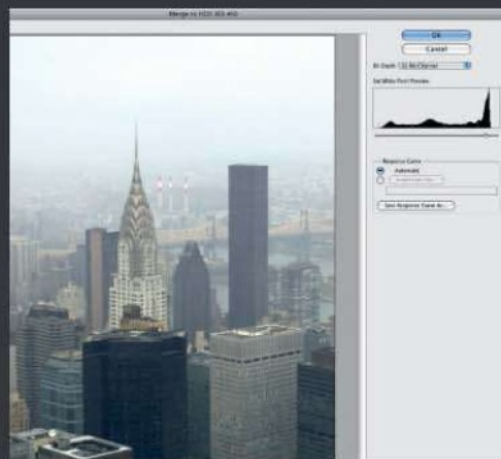
Although you can cut Photoshop out of the HDR-creation process, its Merge to HDR command is great when it comes to aligning images that have been shot handheld. Photomatrix Pro works really well with tripod-mounted shots where the differences between frames are negligible, but it can struggle when there is a greater disparity between the shots, creating unusual artefacts. Using Photoshop in this instance is simply a case of choosing the best tool for the job, and sometimes that can mean using the tools from two different programs.



**1** Opening the images in Adobe Bridge lets you see easily which ones have the most potential. I selected three raw files and then chose Tools>Photoshop>Merge to HDR.



**2** Photoshop's Merge to HDR dialogue doesn't provide you with much control, but it does work. Choose 32 Bit/Channel from the Bit Depth drop-down menu to create the HDR image and keep the Response Curve set to Automatic. You can adjust the Set White Point Preview to alter the preview image, but this only affects the preview – it has no bearing on the HDR image whatsoever. Click OK when you've finished.



**3** Photoshop will generate your HDR file and open it as a single image. It won't look too impressive at this stage, but what you have is a 32-bit file that's ready to be tone-mapped. Select File>Save As... to save the file in the OpenEXR format.



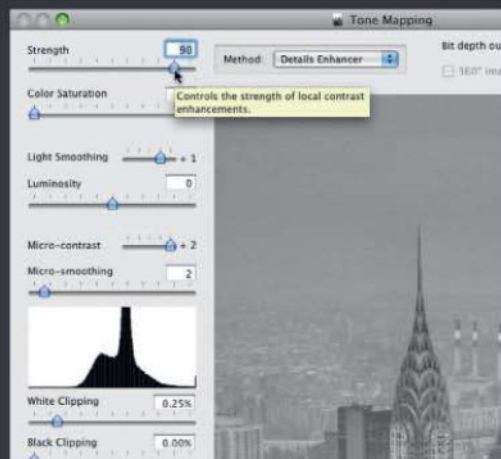
**4** For tone-mapping, one of the best tools is Photomatrix Pro, a dedicated HDR program. Open Photomatrix and use File>Open to open your HDR image. The high-contrast preview image will not look good, but this is just because you're trying to display a HDR image on a low-dynamic-range monitor. If you roll over a point in the image, the small HDR Viewer window will show you what detail is there.



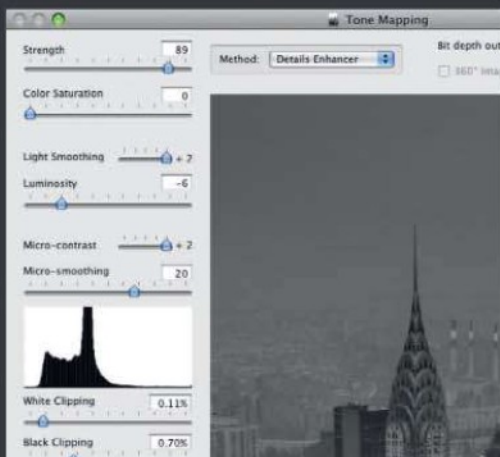
**5** To reduce the high dynamic range to something that's viewable (and usable), the next step is tone-mapping. Select HDR>Tone Mapping from the top menu. When the dialogue opens, the preview image will look better. Start by choosing Details Enhancer from the Methods drop-down menu, and set the Bit Depth Output Image to 16-bit so you have plenty of information in the finished file.



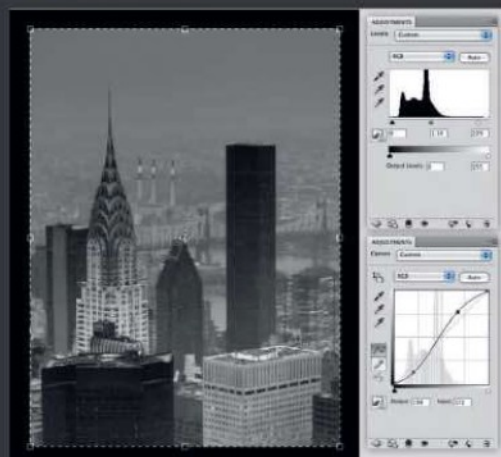
**6** For a black & white image, I reduced the Color Saturation to 0. You could produce your HDR picture in colour, then convert it to black & white afterwards, but doing it first gives a better idea of how it will work in monochrome from the outset. Now just tweak the sliders until you get the effect you want. Setting the Strength slider to a high amount will make any changes more obvious.



**7** The actual settings you end up with aren't particularly important as it's the image that counts, but for the ones I finished with see right. To ensure a full tonal range, keep an eye on the histogram for any clipping. This can be controlled with the White and Black Clipping sliders. Once you're happy with the effect, click OK to generate the 16-bit image, then choose File>Save As... and save it as a TIFF.



**8** Now it's back to Photoshop with the 16-bit TIFF file for some finishing touches. Here, a tighter crop helps concentrate the image, while Levels and Curves adjustment layers add a little more contrast. The result may not be what the camera saw, but it's definitely how the city felt at the time.









# How to... Make the most of angles



Too often we take a quick shot at head height and miss out on a scene's potential for a unique image. **Paul Whiting** visits Winchester Cathedral in Hampshire and explains how to explore different angles and viewpoints

**WHEN** we are making images, we are always trying to find the best solution to one of the key problems: composition. Yet when we are on location, how do we know we have captured the best possible image of our subject? To some extent, 'best' is a subjective term and will depend on personal preferences. However, there are certain things we should consider when approaching a subject to ensure we explore all the possibilities and maximise our chances of a successful image.

One of the key considerations for an attention-grabbing image is the angle we present to the viewer by adopting a certain position or viewpoint relative to the subject. Unless we are seeking a very literal or documentary approach to our subject, we should aim to achieve something a little different from the standard view.

The initial viewpoint, or angle, for most of us when capturing a scene is to hold the camera at head height. This is natural, since it is probably how we first saw the subject and we may be tempted to think that an image taken from this angle will be successful. However, to move beyond the basic we should consider some of the following aspects of composition and intent.

If we walk around a scene, the relationship between the objects within it will change as features become visible or obscured and backgrounds alter. New arrangements will be revealed that will evoke different moods. In some cases, you may find your initial point of interest changes as you look around.

While exploring the subject we should also assess the effect of pointing the camera upwards or downwards from the eye-level position and then vary the height of the camera in relation to the subject.

What happens when the camera is at ground level? In the case of a building, when we adopt a low viewpoint and angle the camera upwards with a wideangle lens,

we create an effect of towering height, enhanced by the converging verticals. When we do this we make the image more visually interesting by emphasising lines and shape in a way that was not apparent at eye-level.

We may also adopt a low viewpoint to emphasise elements on the ground, such as the floor in a building or a rock in a landscape. A low angle can emphasise leading lines that recede from the fore to the background of a scene. This creates a sense of depth, which is a key compositional technique. At head height, these elements can get lost and the image often appears dull and two-dimensional.

As well as low angles we should be alert to the possibility of higher viewpoints. When arriving at a scene, check if it is possible to get to a higher position by climbing some stairs or a hill. The scene may change appearance and you may find new subject matter you can look down on for interesting and dramatic images. Alternatively, it may simply be the benefit of an elevated position removing unwanted or distracting details that were present in the frame at eye-level.

We should also not discount extreme camera angles. For example, the interior of ornate buildings can make for very interesting subjects if we turn the camera so that it is pointing directly upwards at the ceiling. In buildings with pillars or columns, the effect of looking directly upwards with a wideangle lens makes for interesting perspectives with vertical elements set against the high features of the ceiling.

Experimenting with focal length is also key as you explore different angles, since you may wish to emphasise a limited part of a scene. Finally, look for both details and the wider view. Do you want to show your image to say, 'I've been there', or do you want to show details or an extraction of the wider view that doesn't immediately identify a subject and location?

## ON LOCATION

**For a truly unique image, you must explore all the angles**

**ALL THE** images in this feature were taken in Hampshire's Winchester Cathedral. I chose the cathedral as it is an excellent subject with which to illustrate the ideas described in this article and highlight the wide variety of possibilities that exist if we look hard enough.

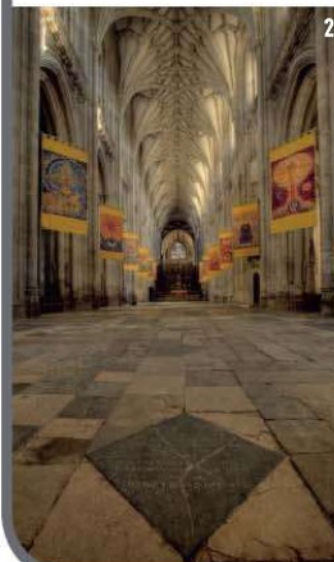
During my visit the wooden chairs in the central area had been removed to reveal the splendid stone floor, and create an awesome appearance of grandeur and open space inside the building. This happens for a few weeks every year from mid-January onwards. Colourful tapestry banners were also hung from the pillars along the central nave.

My aim in approaching this location was to try to capture one or two 'traditional' images with a wideangle lens that would illustrate the beauty of the building's interior while in its little-seen, chairless state. I chose to visit early in the morning as I knew there would be fewer people around and the light would be soft. I then planned to walk all around the interior and look for different angles to illustrate features such as the shape and texture of the stonework, ceiling and windows to show how the elements could be arranged together to create an unusual image. The photograph should be able to stand in its own right as a piece of architectural art and also make the viewer want to visit the cathedral.



### 1 BASIC SCENE

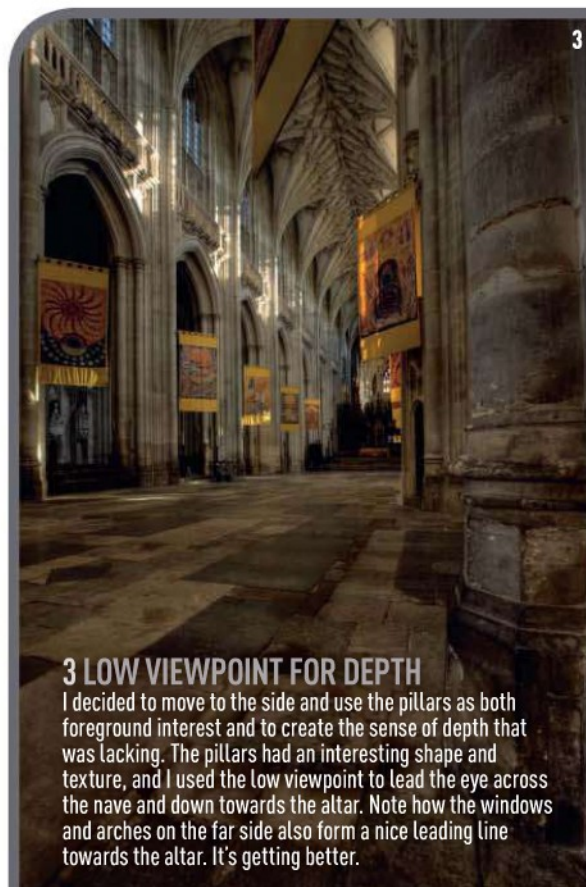
This image is just a starting point. It's a competent shot, taken from slightly lower than head height. I kept the camera straight using a spirit level to minimise any optical distortion effects. However, it doesn't grab the viewer's attention. The foreground is largely featureless and the image has failed to go beyond illustration.



### 2 LOWER ANGLE

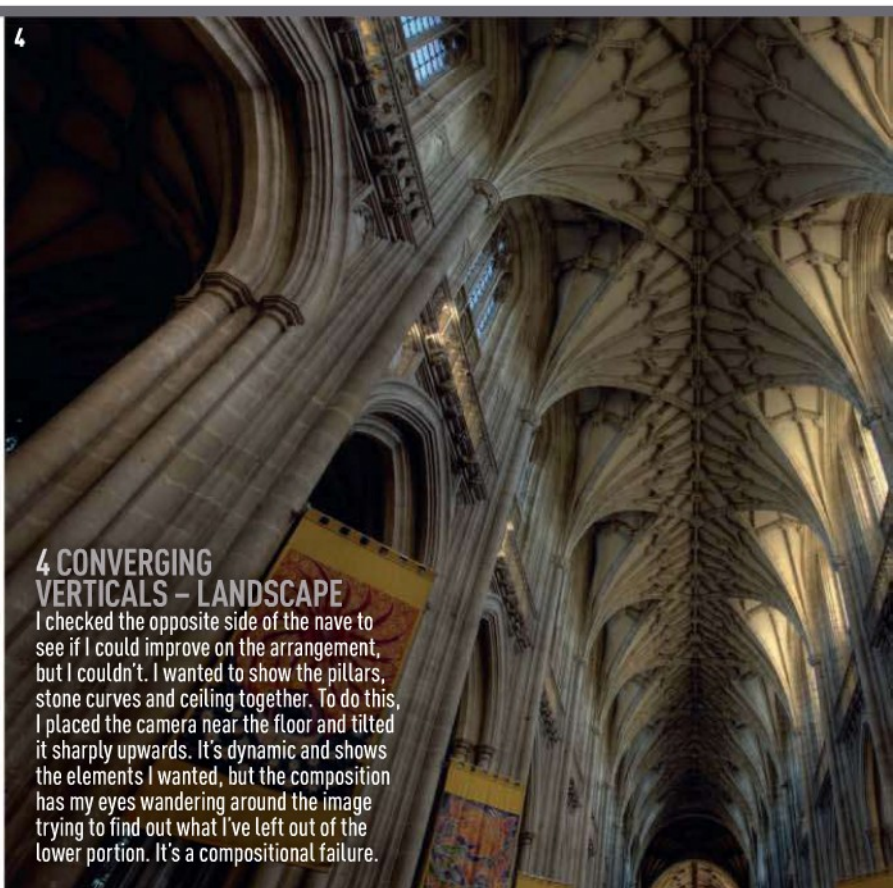
The camera was positioned low down towards the floor and I identified a possible foreground element (the stone diamond) to fill the interest gap. However, it didn't really succeed because the lighting on the floor was too flat to really separate the diamond. Also, I was still not getting a feeling of great height with this straight camera angle, or of any depth due to my lack of real foreground interest.





### 3 LOW VIEWPOINT FOR DEPTH

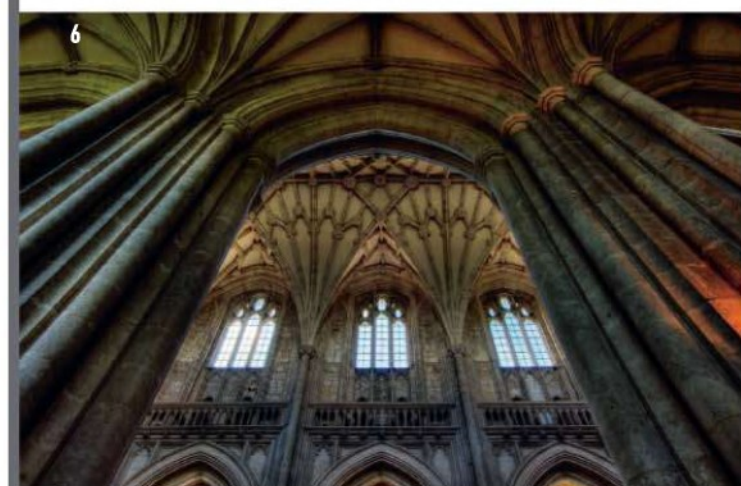
I decided to move to the side and use the pillars as both foreground interest and to create the sense of depth that was lacking. The pillars had an interesting shape and texture, and I used the low viewpoint to lead the eye across the nave and down towards the altar. Note how the windows and arches on the far side also form a nice leading line towards the altar. It's getting better.



### 4 CONVERGING VERTICALS – LANDSCAPE

I checked the opposite side of the nave to see if I could improve on the arrangement, but I couldn't. I wanted to show the pillars, stone curves and ceiling together. To do this, I placed the camera near the floor and tilted it sharply upwards. It's dynamic and shows the elements I wanted, but the composition has my eyes wandering around the image trying to find out what I've left out of the lower portion. It's a compositional failure.

**'This image describes the essence of the cathedral: structure, age, texture, light and glass fused together'**



### 6 INCLUDING THE SIDE WINDOWS

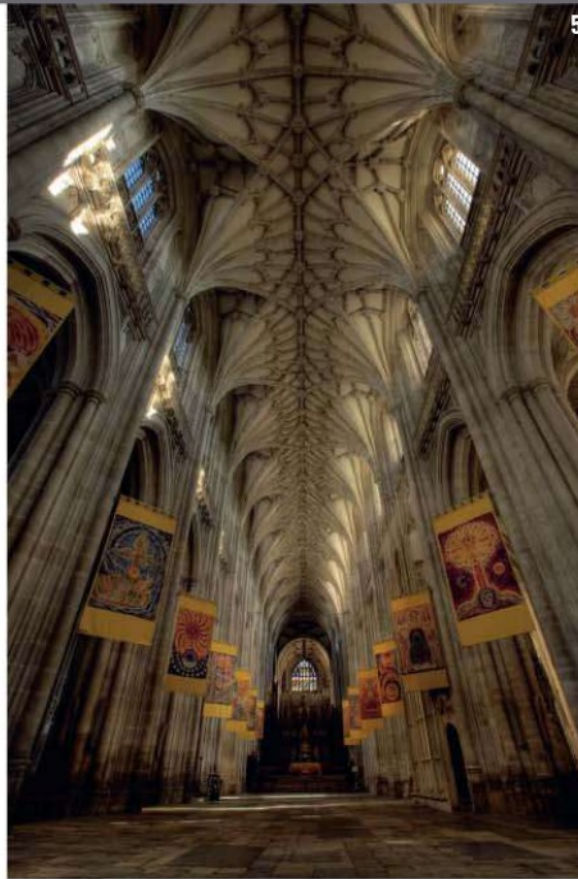
I moved to the side again and looked across the nave. I used two pillars to create a frame within a frame. The angle shows the main arch framing three windows and the tops of the opposite arches to create a pleasing shape that works through echoing and repeating patterns. The upward-looking wide angle has achieved this. I've now extracted something smaller from the grand view and it's starting to feel more like an original image.



### 7 ALMOST THERE

I still wanted to show the pillar structure combined with the roof. I placed the camera on its back on the floor and had it pointing directly upwards. I experimented using the LCD to guide me in order to create an arrangement that had the pillar pointing straight up with the arch ending neatly in the corner of the frame. I like this, but it lacks contrast and seems to exclude too much.





## 5 CONVERGING VERTICALS – PORTRAIT

When I rotated the camera to portrait format I liked the shapes and lines that developed; the foreground provides balance but it's minimal. I've now homed in nicely on the structure, line and shape idea I started with. However, the highlight on the stonework in the top-left corner of the frame is a distraction, and I felt I was still trying to include too much in the frame. I needed to simplify things.

## 8 FINAL COMPOSITION

For me, this image describes the essence of the cathedral: structure, age, texture, light and glass fused together to create a visual feast. The ancient pillar, illustrated by its chipped stonework, creates the dynamic effect of height and its arch continues elegantly to the corner of the frame. The patterns on the roof are fully revealed and the three windows on the left balance the fourth on the right. Nothing is straight or geometrically 'correct', but the elements balance through the choice of camera angle, focal length (wideangle) and viewpoint. A black & white conversion and a slight boost in contrast provide added polish.





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## Identifying adders

### LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS

**ALSO** known as vipers, adders are short, stout snakes with a black zigzag marking running down the back. Females are usually larger, less distinctly marked and have more brown on their bodies than their male counterparts. Adders show great variability in colour, with brown and grey the most common, but they can also be blue, green, tan, yellow and black. An adder's eye is copper-coloured with a stunning black vertical pupil. However, the best-known fact about adders is their bite, which is poisonous – so they must command your complete respect.

## Where and how to find them

**ADDERS** are fairly common in mainland Britain, but there are indications they are becoming scarcer. They like a variety of habitats and can be found in many areas in England, Scotland and Wales. The first place to ask is your local natural history group as they may be able to help you, although you may have to become a member first. You could also try contacting your local Wildlife Trust. A recent TV programme featuring wildlife presenter and photographer Chris Packham revealed that adders are present on Thorne Moors in South Yorkshire, and the BBC's *The One Show* also reported on adders in Cornwall. The New Forest is a good area to find them, as are parts of Anglesey. The Forestry Commission website lists lots of adder sites. Visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/website/wildwoods](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/wildwoods) for more information. If you do find an area with an adder population, let relevant groups, such as your local Wildlife Trust, know.

AP's expert guide to photographing...

# Adders

March is a great time to photograph adders as they start to emerge from hibernation. **Paul Hobson** explains how to capture brilliant images of the UK's only poisonous snake – safely and ethically



## Get kitted out

**I LIKE** to wear boots that cover my ankles and I make sure my trousers are tucked inside. The most likely way to get bitten is to step on an adder, so be cautious about where you put your feet. You don't need camouflage gear, but I tend to wear clothes that are green and brown so I'm not too noticeable. Walking slowly across moorland or heathland and frequently stopping is likely to arouse curiosity, so you may be quizzed about what you are doing. If the area is in a National Park or nature reserve, make sure you have permission to be there.



**'Adders probably won't appear above ground until the mid-morning'**



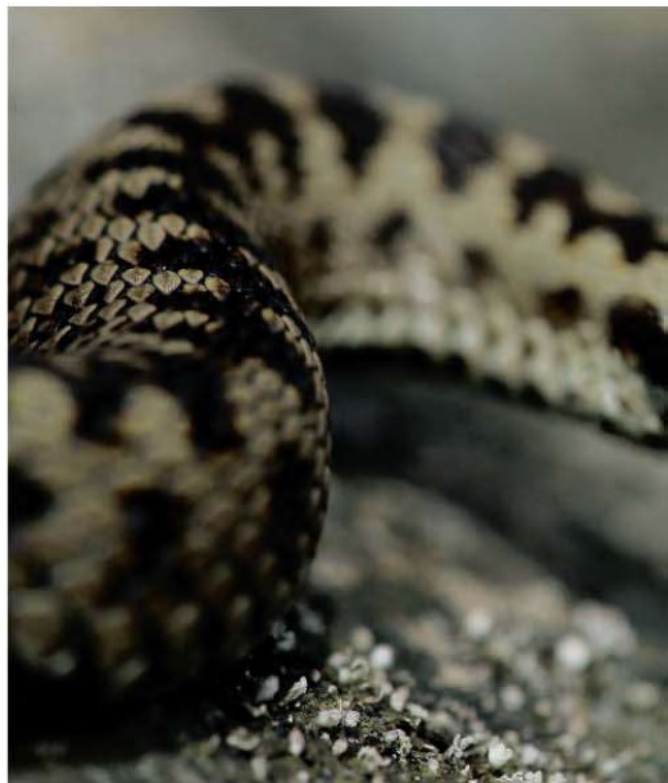
**AS WINTER** begins to relinquish its icy grip, signs of life are starting to reappear. One of the species that has lain low for the past few months is the humble adder, Britain's only venomous reptile. Adders hibernate from September to March. They are widespread throughout the UK (although not in Ireland), and can be found in many areas, including woodland, hedgerows, bogs and heathland – anywhere, in fact, there is overgrown and undisturbed land.

Snakes are not everyone's ideal photographic subject, and there is no animal group that elicits so much emotion, fear and loathing – apart from spiders, of course. Yet snakes, with their variety of markings and winding, coiled shape, are creatures of phenomenal beauty, and a growing number of photographers are starting to realise their potential as interesting subjects.

### LOCATING THE SNAKES

Photographing adders is not as difficult as it might at first seem. The starting point is tracking down an adder habitat. Begin by asking local naturalists and natural history societies where the hot spots are near you (see *Where and how to find them* on page 27). Once you have found a good area, the best time to look for snakes is when they are sunbathing. Adders hibernate through the winter, but will come above ground to get the most from the sun's rays early in the year. I have often found them basking in early March when the air temperature is in the chilly single digits, and this is the best time to look for them.

Pick a sunny day when there is little wind and the air is cool. You don't need to set out too early, as adders probably won't appear above ground until mid-morning. It is possible to look for adders in late summer, but they tend to be far more active and less willing to have their portrait taken. Later in the year, when the autumn chills are starting, can be a good time to look for them. You must be careful, though, as females may be pregnant at this time and will be trying to get the most from the weakening sun to help their youngsters develop, so don't disturb them.



### MAKING YOUR APPROACH

In early spring adders are quite sluggish, but they can sense heavy footsteps so a soft, slow walking pace is advisable. They won't be out in the open, but rather tucked away in sheltered areas. Look for places that are bathed in sunshine, such as the sides of paths, old railway lines, woodland clearings and under tufts of heather or bracken. Adders are not always easy to spot as their zigzag markings can make them difficult to see, so you have to learn to 'get your eye in'.

When I come to an area where I think adders might be present, I stop and scan all likely spots before slowly edging closer. Close-focusing binoculars can help you spot snakes. If you have scanned an area and haven't found any, cover the same ground again. I often find an adder lurking in a spot I had looked at a few hours earlier. They are creatures of habit and have favourite sunbathing spots, so if you do see one slithering off into the undergrowth return in a few hours or on another day. You will know where to look and a stealthy approach should present a great photographic opportunity.

### SETTING UP YOUR SHOT

Once you know where to find the snakes, you need to be photographically prepared. Sometimes an adder will allow you to put your bag down and set up your camera gear, but many won't put up with such disturbance. When I search for these snakes, I have my camera ready and the lens mounted – a 70–200mm or 100–300mm zoom is ideal, especially if it allows close-focus. The memory card will be in the camera, which will be switched on with the ISO and exposure already set.

**Drawing attention to the snake's head through depth of field control is one way to create impact and drama**

### TOP TIP GO BACK REGULARLY

Once you have found a spot where the adders sunbathe, try visiting it a number of times. Take a small stool with you so you can sit and watch the snakes. Waiting patiently will increase your chances of capturing a good image.





## The ethics of photographing adders

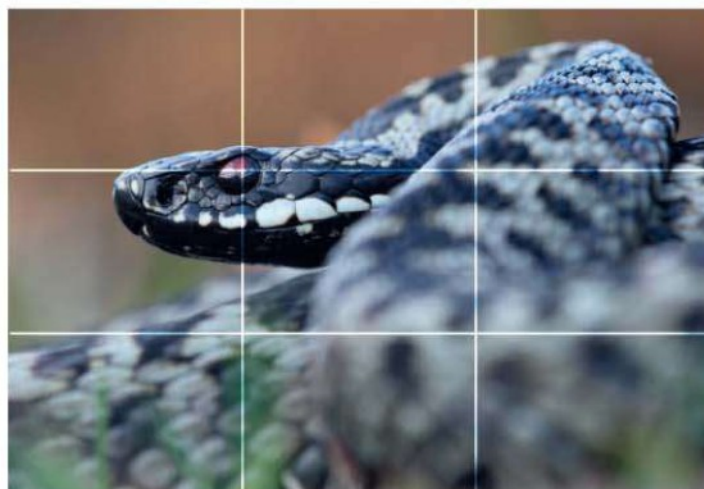
**ADDERS** are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act. They are poisonous and a bite is very nasty indeed. You must respect the snake at all times and minimise disturbance. There are sadly a number of people who think these stunning animals are dangerous and should be killed, and this is why some groups are reluctant to divulge adder sites. It is an offence to kill an adder. Don't try to get too close and certainly don't pick one up. Also, don't try to remove any distracting vegetation. If you are careful and approach the snake quietly and slowly, you will be able, with practice, to get good images. The danger comes from trying to capture that perfect image and edging closer to get a 'cleaner' shot. Resist the temptation.

When I spot an adder in a photogenic place, I bring the camera slowly to my eye and carefully move closer. I don't use a tripod because it would be too cumbersome, so I always have the camera handheld – although a monopod is sometimes useful. Handholding means you will need shutter speeds of at least 1/125sec. Practise beforehand to find out at which shutter speeds you can comfortably handhold your camera and still capture sharp images.

### TAKING A PICTURE

Start by taking a few shots from head height and see how the adder reacts.

If you move slowly you can get quite close, but be careful not to move too near. Always keep at least two metres from the snake. Once in position you could try bending down to take a lower-angle shot, and then eventually kneeling down. The joy of a longer lens means you don't need to get too close to your subject and risk scaring it off – or worse, putting yourself at risk. Depending on the situation, you may even be able to get down low enough to be at eye level with the snake. While these reptiles sunbathe on banks it can be an ideal opportunity to capture dramatic eye-to-eye shots. **AP**



Thinking in terms of the Rule of Thirds can help you when framing your shot

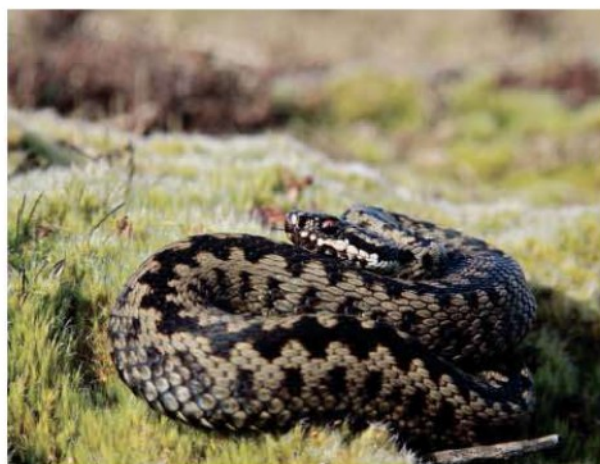
## COMPOSITION

**ONCE** you have established a shooting position, concentrate on your composition. Think about the Rule of Thirds and ask yourself whether you are going to include the whole snake, and whether you will position its body to one side to avoid central shots. If you have gained the snake's trust, you can think about isolating its head in the frame, and a zoom lens of 200mm or 300mm is ideal for this. You may want to throw some of the foreground out of focus to draw attention to the snake's head and eye, and a shallow depth of field will help to blur the background. Be ready in case the adder uses its tongue to 'taste the air' – if it does, take a series of shots using the camera's motordrive. A shutter speed of 1/250sec or faster is advisable, but if you can't set it fast enough then increase the camera's ISO setting.

Adders have stunning zigzag patterns running along their backs, so

think about how you can use these in your image. Sometimes overhead shots can accentuate the pattern, or instead try focusing on the head and neck of the body. Always be aware of your depth of field, and if your camera has a depth-of-field preview button use it to judge how much of the image is sharp and then adjust your aperture accordingly.

Make sure you don't remove any distracting pieces of vegetation and don't try to touch or re-position the snake. It is a poisonous animal and while a bite may not kill, it is incredibly painful and will make you very ill. So that you don't include rogue pieces of grass in your composition, slowly change your shooting angle and see if a new position is any better. In the end, you may find the adder is so covered by grass that you can't get a clean image. If this is the case, leave the snake in peace and look elsewhere.



To see more of Paul's images visit [www.paulhobson.co.uk](http://www.paulhobson.co.uk)



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## How to submit images to Reader Spotlight

Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit [www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight](http://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight)



### Ian Andrew Shropshire

Ian, 41, took up photography seriously after a trip to India when he decided to upgrade to a DSLR camera. 'I'm fascinated by derelict buildings and the effect nature has on them,' he says, 'especially the way painted walls crack and peel to reveal interesting textures and colours.' These images were taken in a deserted farmhouse. To see more of Ian's images visit [www.flickr.com/photos/ian-andrew/collections](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ian-andrew/collections).

#### Corridor

1 Ian balances colour, texture and light to create depth and a strong sense of perspective

Nikon D80, 18-135mm, 1/5sec at f/5.6, ISO 200, tripod

#### Looking through

2 'Gaps in the building's structure let in light beautifully, so I thought I'd try a self-portrait,' says Ian

Nikon D80, 18-135mm, 5secs at f/8, ISO 100, tripod







Staircase  
Ian used HDR imaging  
and combined three  
exposures in Photomatrix  
to correctly expose  
this contrasty image  
Nikon D80, 18-135mm,  
1/2sec at f/8, ISO 200



## Newlands Valley, Cumbria

1 'I was struck by the moving clouds and sunset over the mountains, and thought a long exposure would capture them nicely,' says Chester

Nikon D300S, 10-20mm, 199secs at f/16, ISO 200, tripod, cable release

## Buttermere, Lake District

2 Chester wanted to capture the coldness and isolation of the location. He merged two exposures – one for the land and one for the sky

Nikon D300S, 18-70mm, 1/40sec at f/8, ISO 360



This really is a picture filled with contrasts. Centring the subject in the frame is so conventional, but here it looks anything but. The light foreground is striking against the incoming gloom, while the rippling water, snow and soft grasses are at odds with the hard black rock of the mountains. The tree is wonderfully lit, and stands out well in the frame. A very interesting image

### EDITOR'S CHOICE

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3



## Chester Tugwell West Sussex

Chester's interest in photography started two years ago after he was inspired by Magnum photographer Mark Power's work. 'I thought his images were fantastic,' says Chester. 'It was the first time I thought of photography as an art form. Since then, I have been slowly developing the craft of image-making with the help of photographers on Flickr.' To see more of Chester's images visit [www.chestertugwellphotography.co.uk](http://www.chestertugwellphotography.co.uk).

4



### Clifton, Oxfordshire

3 'There was quite a bit of moonlight, but to pick out the shape of the tree I knew I would have to paint it with torchlight,' says Chester

Nikon D300S, 10-20mm, 43secs at f/4.5, ISO 200, tripod, cable release

### Lake District pathway

4 Chester wanted to portray the charm of the countryside in winter by capturing the colours of the land and spindly outlines of trees

Nikon D300S, 10-20mm, 1/40sec at f/6.3, ISO 360



## David Potts South Yorkshire

David, 47, started taking pictures in the late 1980s after his wife bought him his dream camera – a Minolta X-300. He enjoys photographing people, landscapes and wildlife, and his favourite locations are the Peak District, Lake District and York (or other tourist destinations) for people photography. These images were taken in various zoos. 'It is a challenge to avoid common errors such as including fences in the frame, but if you think carefully about your background and lighting you can create great animal images,' says David. To see more of David's images visit [www.davepphoto.net](http://www.davepphoto.net).



### Giraffe

1 David photographed this giraffe at Chester Zoo. 'I like the back-lighting effect on the mane,' he says  
Nikon D80, 80-300mm, 1/125sec at f/9, ISO 200

### Sea eagle

2 David zooms in close on this bird at Knowsley Safari Park in Merseyside  
Nikon D80, 80-300mm, 1/320sec at f/5.6, ISO 640

### Lion

3 'I took this at Chester Zoo through the chain-link fencing,' says David  
Nikon D80, 80-300mm, 1/200sec at f/6, ISO 200, monopod





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# AP Appraisal



Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor **Damien Demolder**



Original



Cropped



Panoramic

**'I think Sevgi's original picture contains all the elements of a great image'**

## Playing catch Sevgi Kaymak

Fujifilm FinePix Z33WP, 6.3mm, 1/240sec at f/8, ISO 100

**SEVGI** took this photograph of two of his friends playing catch at Siesta Key in Sarasota, Florida, and it's an amazing picture. He used a waterproof camera, which is always a good idea when at the beach. It has a 3:4 proportioned sensor, so he's shot an image that is almost square. I'm generally jealous of people who shoot photos in those proportions – like cameras with Four Thirds-format sensors – because I think it's a beautiful format that works well for a lot of different scenes.

However, this image is unusual because the distance between the two guys playing catch really stretches the picture. There's also a lot of sky, which is perhaps a little distracting. When I first looked at the image, I wasn't sure whether I was meant to be looking at the people or at the clouds and their

reflections. So the first thing I did was crop the picture to the same proportions that Sevgi would have had if he were shooting using a 35mm camera, which gives us a greater sense of length but without quite so much sky.

When you pare it down, though, what's really interesting about this picture is the two guys playing catch amid the general scene. So I made a second crop with the proportions of 6:17, which is what you would get if you were using a proper panoramic camera.

This reduces the scene down to its key elements. We still have the stormy sky and the two people, but I've removed the foreground as I found it a little distracting. In doing this, I was careful to crop the beach so that the bottom of the picture sits in a slightly darker zone than in the original photo.

When the bottom of a picture sits in a light area, as Sevgi's image did, it can sometimes be difficult to look past it and into the scene – a bit like trying to step over a wall into someone's garden. By cropping the picture so the bottom sits in a dark area, it's much easier to get into the shot. Finally, to finish it off, I desaturated it slightly as I found the green a little overpowering.

Despite my adjustments, though, I think Sevgi's original picture is really quite stunning and it contains all the elements of a great image, which is why it is my picture of the week. I suspect that he was probably a victim of the proportions of his sensor, so I'd like to encourage everyone to take control of their compositions to create stronger pictures, even if it means cropping the image in post-production.

**PICTURE OF THE WEEK**

## TOP TIP

Cropping isn't just about making a small part of a picture larger in the frame. Altering the proportions of width and height in the rectangular picture (above) has had a profound impact on composition and the way the eye travels around the scene.

## WIN

Damien's picture of the week wins a £50 Jessops store voucher\*. The two runners-up each win a £25 voucher\* to spend on photobooks from Jessops' online service at [www.jessops.com](http://www.jessops.com). \*UK residents only

## How to submit your pictures

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## Valley mist Roger Tapp

Canon EOS 5D, 28-200mm, 1/400sec at f/7.1, ISO 800

**ROGER** originally sent in this picture for the H<sub>2</sub>O round of APOY 2009, and says he was seeking to capture the mist that fills the valleys and cloaks the fields just before dawn on the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset. It really is a beautiful scene, and I can imagine that it's an absolute delight to be there first thing in the morning. The great thing about mist for photographers is that it gives lovely silhouettes against a pale grey background, which makes the world look completely different and ghostly.

The only real issue with this shot is that the beautiful peach-coloured sky doesn't go with the cool blue misty foreground. On the one hand we have a simple graphic image of the intersection of hills and trees and telegraph poles, and on the other hand we have a beautifully soft, romantic image at the top of the frame. While it is a beautiful scene, and no doubt easy to appreciate when you're there, as a photograph I don't think the two elements work very well together. So what I've done is demonstrate how the two halves of the picture are very different scenes by separating them to make two panoramic images. By doing so you can see what I mean more clearly.

I love the sky as it is, and while the ground is also quite beautiful I've tried a little experiment by converting it to a monochromatic image. I then toned it very lightly to emphasise the graphic element, which, once the colour is removed, can be appreciated much more easily.

As a final thought, it's important when composing photographs through the viewfinder that you really look and consider whether everything within the frame actually works together.



## Skyscraper Callum Stringer

Pentax Optio Z10, 6.3mm, 1/250sec at f/7, ISO 64

**CALLUM** has already featured once in AP (*Appraisal*, 5 December 2009), and he's still only 12. He took this picture using a Pentax Optio Z10 compact camera, which is quite limited in its features, and so has demonstrated to all us oldies that you don't need a professional camera to take decent pictures.

This is an interesting picture. The building on the right is sending a series of diagonal lines set against a dark background into the frame, but then there is a pale building whizzing up into the sky like a rocket. These make for reasonably interesting shapes on their own, but then there is also a crane leaning over holding a large bucket-like object. The curving shape of the crane adds a completely new dimension to the image: now the orderly straight lines and squares are being disrupted by this curving geometric vandal coming into shot. It adds a lot of interest to an

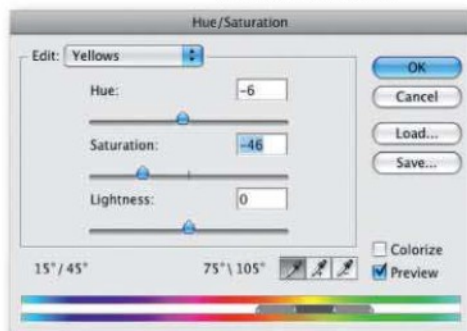
otherwise ordinary picture.

However, it is important for the viewer to be able to concentrate on the main themes of the picture, and unfortunately that is a little difficult here because of the large 'T' stuck to the wall in the bottom right-hand corner of the frame. I assume that it is part of the logo for whichever company operates in the building, but the way it bursts into the side of the picture is distracting and my eye can't help but be drawn to it. To combat this problem I've cropped the picture, keeping the same proportions but losing some of the bottom and right-hand edges to remove the letter completely. This then lets us concentrate solely on the graphical elements of the image.

A second issue is that the colours are just a bit too yellow. So, using the Hue/Saturation tool in Photoshop, I selected the yellow channel and desaturated it, but only a little so that it didn't turn too cold (see image, below left). I also shifted the hue to try to neutralise the slight 'greenness'. Finally, I made a slight tweak in Curves to add some contrast and create a greater separation between the light and dark tones.

It's a great shot that is really well seen and taken. Just remember that when you're excited by a subject, check around the edges of the frame to make sure you've not included any distracting elements.

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**'The curving shape of the crane adds a completely new dimension to the image'**





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**P-Type Filter System**  
The P-Type square/rectangular filter system consists of three parts:  
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2) A filter holder clips onto the ring  
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# SIGMA



## OUR WORLD

**Julian Olivas:** Born in the Philippines in 1946. Photographer, architect, and helicopter pilot based in New York. Fusing these three passions, he is currently running 'Global Air to Ground', an aerial photography business. His award-winning photographs of landscapes and people working in extreme environments are displayed in a wide range of venues, including galleries.

*Photo data: SIGMA 50-200mm F4-5.6 DC OS HSM, 1/160 second exposure at F6.3.*

## JULIAN OLIVAS SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS.

**Aiming to capture the majesty of wild horses from his helicopter, camera shake posed no problem.**

In Alaska's Aleutian Islands, wild horses gallop across a prairie at breakneck speed in the blazing summer sun. This stunning aerial shot was captured by Sigma's new compact, 50-200mm F4-5.6 DC OS HSM telephoto zoom lens. It features Sigma's own Optical Stabiliser (OS) function which reduces camera shake, making steady, hand held photography a reality. An inner focusing system and SLD (Special Low Dispersion) glass ensure high image quality at any distance. The Super Multi-Layer Coating reduces flare and ghosting and provides high contrast images throughout the entire zoom range. Sigma's HSM (Hyper Sonic Motor) ensures a quiet and high-speed auto focus.

\*Vignetting (a darkening of the corners of the image) will occur if the lens is used with digital SLR cameras with image sensors larger than APS-C size or 35mm SLRs, and APS SLRs

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# AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's **equipment tests**, **reader questions** and **technique pointers**



## Stealth Gear Extreme Photographer's Jacket/Vest £199.99 and Trousers £59.99

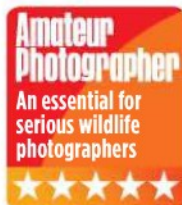
For more information visit [www.stealth-gear.com](http://www.stealth-gear.com)

**THE NEW** Stealth Gear jacket is an updated version of the jacket we reviewed as part of the Stealth Gear Photographer's Suit in AP 22 August 2009. The jacket now doubles as a vest thanks to the removable sleeves, and removable padding has been added to the shoulders and elbows. A new studded rubber strip on the shoulders also helps to grip camera straps.

The material used to line the large side pockets has been improved to help protect cameras and lenses from knocks. Behind these expanding pockets, zipped side vents have been fitted to improve airflow and manoeuvrability. As the jacket has pockets of all sizes, many photographers may get away with not actually having to carry a camera bag at all.

The Stealth Gear Trousers have removable padding on the knees, straps around the waist to hold camera pouches, a security pocket and internal leg gaiters. Brace attachments have been added, and braces will be available at a later date.

I gave the original suit four stars out of five, and the improvements have made the product even better. **Richard Sibley**



Above: Rubber shoulder strips have been added to the jacket, and knee padding to the trousers

### The AP guarantee to you

All our tests are conducted by people who understand the product area, as well as photography. We aim to discover any shortcomings, as well as finding those aspects that deserve praise. All our tests are thorough, honest and independent

## Hama Traveller Mini Pro tripod £39.99

For more information visit [www.hama.co.uk](http://www.hama.co.uk)

**IT MAY** only be March but summer is, hopefully, just around the corner. Thinking a few months ahead, Hama has introduced the Traveller Mini Pro tripod, which is designed to be taken on trips out.

Made from aluminium, the Traveller Mini Pro measures just 39.5cm when compacted, yet the four-section legs extend to give the tripod a height of 117cm. Unfortunately, the legs have only one position, so they can't be splayed wider for extra stability. With the tripod weighing just 720g it should be small and light enough to fit in a suitcase, but if not it has its own carry case.

I found that the small ball-and-socket head held a Sony Alpha 450 DSLR with 18-55mm kit lens quite securely, but the tripod, and particularly the head, isn't suitable for the weight of professional-level cameras and lenses.

For those looking for a small tripod to take away, the Hama Traveller Mini Pro is good value for money, but if you have a larger budget there are better tripods available.

**Richard Sibley**



**FORTHCOMING TESTS** In the next few months AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

### Olympus E-PL1

With a simplified interface and built-in flash, is the E-PL1 the perfect camera for learning about photography?

### Samsung NX10

Samsung's new mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera with 14.6 million pixels.

### Canon EOS 550D

The 'baby' EOS 7D, with 18 million pixels, an APS-C-sized sensor and Full HD video.

### Canon iPF5100

A2 prints using Canon's 12-colour pigment ink system.

### Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2

Panasonic's latest Micro Four Thirds camera featuring a new touchscreen.



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Adrian Wicks – Birmingham

## Digital Photography for beginners

The Foundation in Digital Photography teaches you how to use your digital camera. You will learn:

- Viewpoint and composition
- How to use your camera's program modes
- All about lenses
- Sharpening your image
- Formatting, sizing and printing
- ISO, flash, exposure and white balance setting
- Basic image editing

Course level: beginner

## Digital Photography intermediate

The Diploma in Digital Photography is more a technical course that teaches you advanced digital skills such as:

- Working with tones: Levels and Curves
- Contrast control
- Using white balance
- Black & white techniques, toning and staining
- Working with colour
- Retouching and sharpening
- Sizing, printing and storing

Course level: intermediate

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AP SP 20 MARCH 2010



# Amateur Photographer Guide to Adobe Photoshop Elements 8



## Part 4 Full Editor

In this, the first of a two-part look at the Full Editor in **Adobe Photoshop Elements 8**, we explain how to make the most of the tools that alter the colours and tones of your images

**GOOD** tools are crucial when it comes to producing high-quality images. Luckily, Adobe provides a variety of such tools that can be used to push around the tones and colours in pictures. Some, like the Histogram and Levels features, have been with us for years.

Others, such as Smart Brushes, provide the convenience of paint-on adjustments with the power of adjustment layers. All are present in the Full Edit mode and it is here that the true power of Elements can be put to work.



### THE FULL EDIT WORKSPACE

**THE PROGRAM** interface is the link between the user and the software. Like most graphics packages, Elements works with a system that includes a series of menus, tools, palettes and dialogue boxes. The images themselves are contained in windows that can be sized and zoomed. Version 8 has the same look and feel as the past couple of versions, with a dark grey surround to most windows and a special Task Pane section that sits on the right of the Editor workspace. Clicking any of these 'task' headings sets up the workspace for the desired action (creating, sharing, editing) and reveals the options in the pane itself.

As we have already seen in the last instalment of this special Photoshop Elements series (see AP 13 February), the Editor contains three different editing workspaces: Full, Quick and Guided. These are accessed via the new drop-down menu by clicking the downward-facing arrow on the right of the Edit Task Pane tab.

The Full Edit workspace is the most sophisticated Elements workspace and it is here that advanced, or precise, editing and enhancement tasks are carried out. This version of Photoshop Elements marks the first time that both Mac and Windows versions of the product



#### 1 Tool bar

Displays icons of the tools available. Can also be displayed in a two-column view

#### 2 Menu bar

Contains features grouped in menus and sub-menus

#### 3 Options bar

Displays the options for the currently selected tool

#### 4 Browse

Go to Organizer or Bridge

#### 5 Welcome Screen

Displays the start options screen for Elements\*

#### 6 Edit modes

Full, Quick and Guided Edit menu entries for switching modes

#### 7 Task Panes

For storing panel options and palettes. Similar to the Palette Well/Bin in previous versions

#### 8 Panels/Palettes

For storing settings, features and options. The Layers palette is displayed here

#### 9 Tutorial notification

Provides links to tutorials for the features you are using\*

#### 10 Image window

Displays the open picture in Elements; can be maximised, minimised and cancelled using the corner buttons

#### 11 Project Bin

For easily switching to the active document from those open in the Editor workspace and displaying files selected in the Organizer or Albums

\*(Windows only)



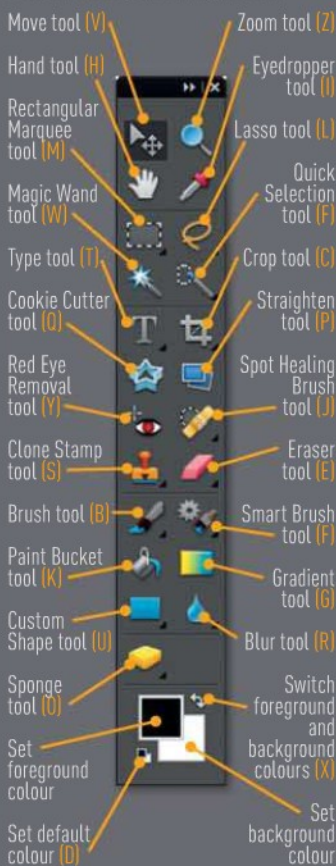
## MENUS

In addition to the File, Edit, View, Window and Help menus, Elements has five specialist headings. The Image menu contains features that change the shape, size, mode and orientation of the picture, while Enhance has a range of options for altering the colour, contrast, brightness and sharpening, plus the Convert to Black and White feature. All functions concerning layers and selections are under the Layer and Select menus, while the available special effects are in the Filter menu.

File Edit Image Enhance Layer Select

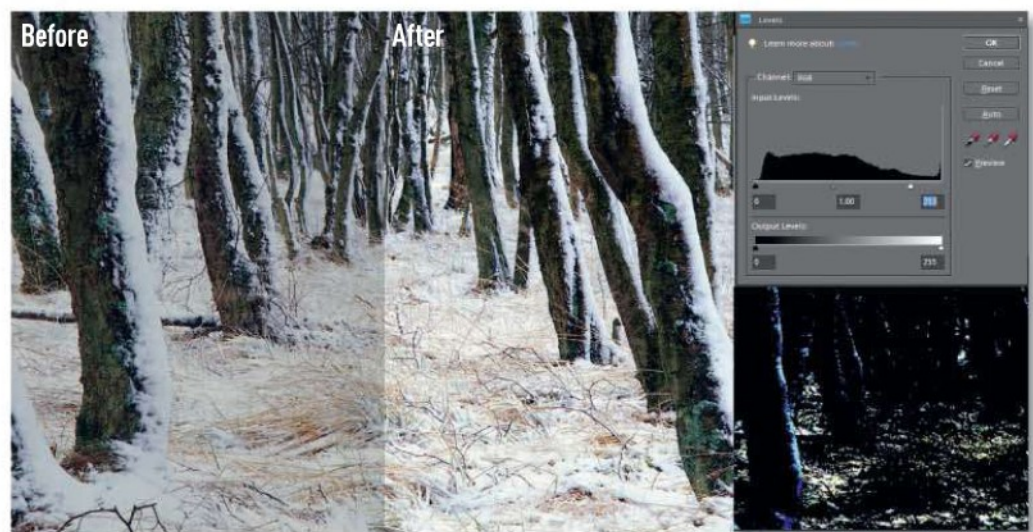
## TOOLS

Tools interact directly with the image and require the use of a mouse or tablet and pen to define the area or extent of their effect. Over the years the number and types of tools found in digital photography packages have been distilled to a common few that are in the toolbox of most programs. Among these items are the Magnifying Glass or Zoom tool, the Brush, the Magic Wand, the Lasso and the Cropping tool. Elements users will also find the Red Eye Removal tool, Custom Shape, Selection Brush, Cookie Cutter, Straighten, Healing Brush, Smart Brush and the Quick Selection tool particularly useful.



(Short-cut commands are in brackets)

# TONAL CONTROL IN ACTION



## POSITIONING WHITE POINTS

The Levels control allows Elements users to place the white point and the first appreciable highlight tone. This is done by opening the Levels dialogue and dragging the highlight input control (the white upwards-facing triangle at the right end of the graph) until it meets the first set of pixels at the very right-hand end of the trace.

Most photographers hold down the Alt/Opt keys when moving the white point

slider inwards. In this way, any pixels being clipped or converted to pure white will be displayed against a black background in the preview. Typically, the white input slider is moved towards the left until the first clipped pixels are seen. Then the slider is backed off a little to ensure that all detail is retained and no pixels are clipped in the corrected image. When you click OK, the pixels in the original image are redistributed using the new white points.

## MIDTONE MOVEMENTS

Once your black and white points have been set, it is time to look at the overall brightness of the image. At best, any adjustment to the darkness or lightness of the midtones should not alter the values set for the black or white points. For this reason, keeping the histogram displayed will forewarn you of any problems at the extremities of the tonal range.

Elements has multiple tools that are capable of midtone adjustments. Some, such as Levels and Adjust Color Curves, are better to use as they maintain black and white points and provide clipping warnings. The way to alter midtones in Levels is to move the middle input slider in the Levels dialogue. Sliding the control to the left increases the brightness of the middle values, while movements to the right darken these values.



## PEGGING BLACK POINTS

'Pegging' is a term used for the action of fixing a specific tone in an image. In the context of black and white points, pegging indicates that the photographer has mapped the two extremes of the image data in his photo to maximum black and maximum white. Here we again turn to the Levels control for the mapping work.

To set the black point, drag the black input slider (on the left of the bottom of the graph in the Levels dialogue) towards the centre. Move the slider until you encounter the first shadow pixels/details. So as not to

convert these details to pure black, move the slider control back to the left slightly so that the shadow details are just to the right of the slider control.

Holding down the Alt/Opt key will preview any shadow details that are being converted to black or clipped against a white background. Red, green or blue coloured pixels indicate that details in these individual channels are being clipped, whereas cyan, magenta or yellow pixels display when two channels are being clipped. Clipping all three channels results in black being displayed against the white background (as above).



Before

After

### ALTERING CONTRAST

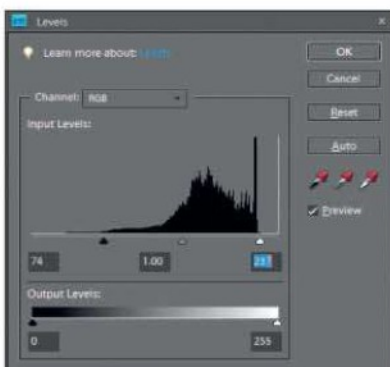
Contrast adjustments, like brightness changes, need to be made without clipping any shadow or highlight details. There are three main approaches. The first involves simply pegging black and white points in Levels to increase the contrast of an otherwise flat image. The second

uses the abilities of Adjust Color Curves to add film-like 'S' curve contrast to a photo where black and white points have already been fixed (as above). Finally, bear in mind that the Shadows/Highlights feature contains a dedicated midtone contrast slider that can provide targeted control of just the midtone contrast.

When most values are bunched in the middle of the tonal range, a low-contrast image results. Spreading the tones so they are distributed over more of the tonal range will increase contrast.

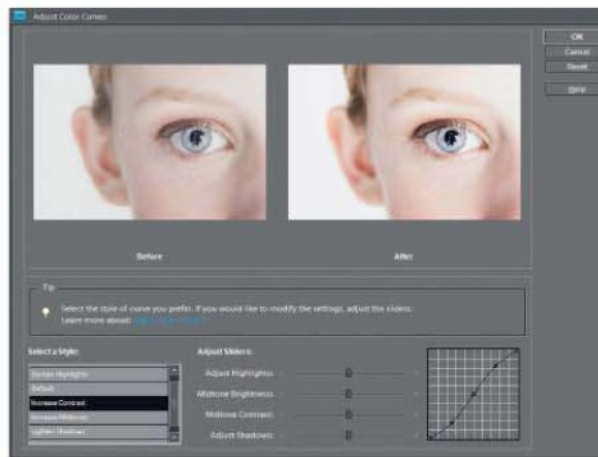
### USING THE ADJUST COLOR CURVES FEATURE

The simplest way to increase contrast using the Adjust Color Curves control is to select the Increase Contrast style from the presets list on the left of the dialogue. This automatically adds a contrast-increasing 'S'-shaped curve. You can further increase the effect by pushing the Highlights slider to the right and the Shadows control to the left.



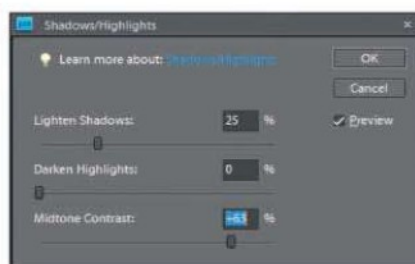
### EMPLOYING SHADOWS/HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE JOB

The Midtone Contrast slider of the Shadows/Highlights feature is great for making quick changes to contrast without affecting black or white points.



### ALTERING CONTRAST WITH LEVELS

To increase contrast, move the Highlights and Shadows input sliders in the Levels dialogue towards the centre of the histogram. Holding the Alt/Opt key while moving the input sliders will preview the pixels that are being clipped. Move the sliders in until you see the first few pixels and then adjust them to ensure no pixels are clipped. To reduce contrast, drag the black and white output sliders towards the centre.



## ENHANCING COLOUR AND TONE

**TWO PICTURE** characteristics that photographers are constantly tweaking are colour and tone. Get these areas right and you are well on the way to producing fabulous photos. Photoshop Elements provides a great range of tools, from the simple to the sophisticated, that are designed precisely for these jobs.

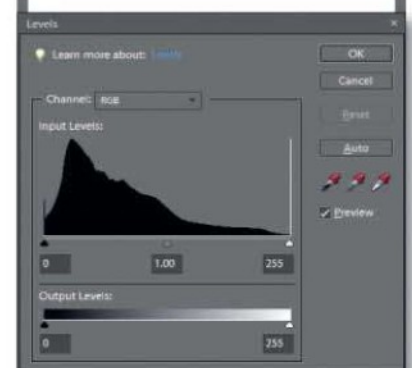
### LEVELS

Looking very similar to the Histogram, this feature allows you to interact directly with the tones in your image. As well as the Histogram-type graph, the dialogue contains two slider bars. The one directly beneath the graph has three triangle controls for black, midtones and white, and represents the input values of the picture. The slider at the bottom of the box shows output settings, and contains black and white controls only.

To distribute the picture tones across the whole of the spectrum, drag the input shadow (left end) and highlight (right end) controls until they meet the first set of pixels at either end of the graph. When you click OK, the pixels in the original image are redistributed using the new white and black points.

Moving the midtone control will change the brightness of the middle values of the image, and moving the output black and white points inwards will flatten, or decrease, the contrast.

Clicking the Auto button automatically distributes the image tones, adjusts colour balance and sets black and white points. A similar result is obtained by selecting Enhance>Auto Levels Adjust from the top menu.







## COLOR CURVES

The Adjust Color Curves feature offers two different means of manipulating the tones in an image, and both are very flexible.

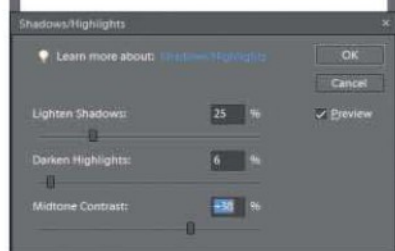
The first is a series of enhancement presets, called Styles, that apply specific curve tweaks to your photos. Selecting one of these options adds the selected adjustment to the photo. Choosing a second option replaces the first tonal tweak with the second Curves adjustment.

The second way is via a set of four slider controls coupled with a graphical Curves display located in the Adjust section. The slider controls include Adjust Highlights, Midtone Brightness, Midtone Contrast and Adjust Shadows options. Moving any of the sliders directly alters the way that the tones are distributed in the image and changes the shape of the curve. Using these controls allows you to fine-tune specific areas of your photo by adding multiple curve adjustments.

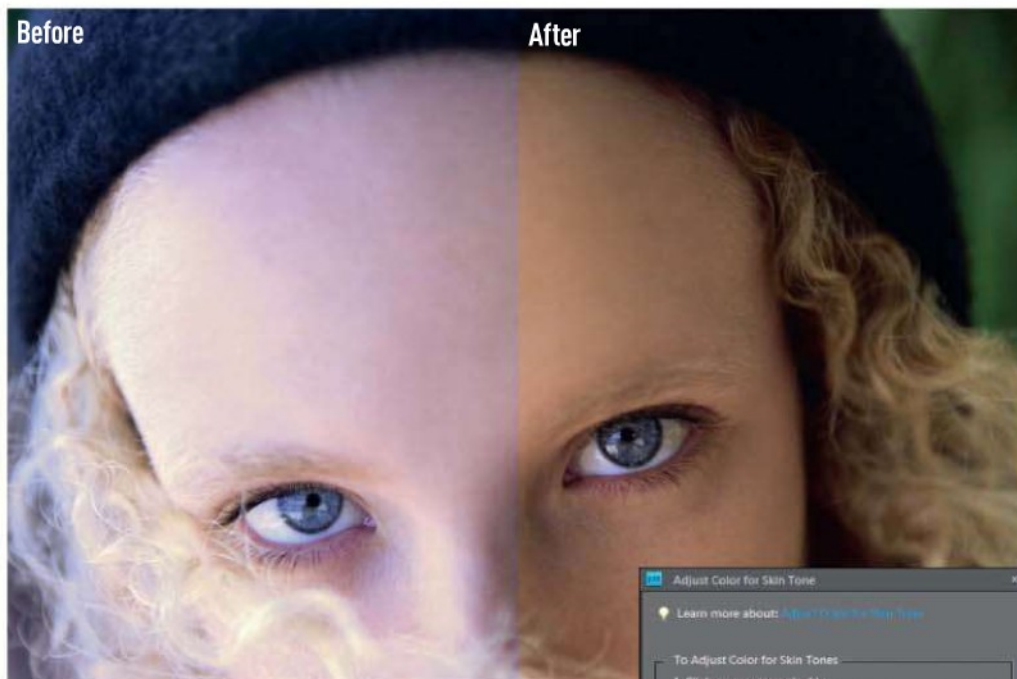
The Reset button removes all Curves changes (both thumbnail selections and slider movements), and restores the default setting, which does not apply any changes to an image.

## SHADOWS/HIGHLIGHTS

The Shadows/Highlight feature allows you to adjust the shadow and highlight areas and midtone contrast of your photo independently. The Photoshop Elements version of the feature contains sliders to Lighten Shadows, Darken Highlights and alter Midtone Contrast. Moving the Shadows control to the right lightens the darker portions of the photo. In contrast, the brightness of the highlights are reduced when dragging this slider to the right. Midtone Contrast adjusts the contrast of the parts of the image not considered to be highlights or shadows.



# COLOUR CONTROL IN ACTION



## FINE-TUNING SKIN TONES

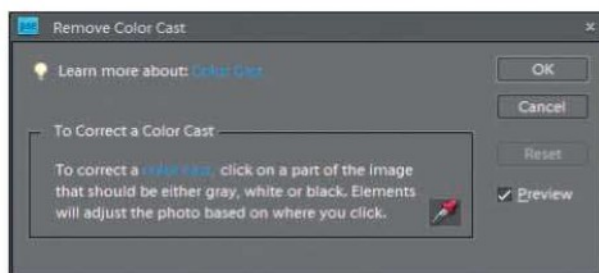
Adjust Color for Skin Tones (Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Color For Skin Tones) is designed to allow you to adjust the hue of the skin tones within an image. Making changes with this feature is a two-step process. When the feature first opens you need to use the Eyedropper tool to select a typical section of skin within the photo. Next, adjust the colour of the skin using the Tan and Blush sliders and the overall colour of the picture using the Temperature control.

The picture can be reverted to its original hues by selecting the Reset button, or the changes can be applied by clicking OK.



## WHITE BALANCING ON THE DESKTOP

Remove Color Cast (Enhance>Adjust Color>Remove Color Cast) provides users with a very direct way of removing unwanted casts from their photos. This feature is designed to be used with images that have areas that are meant to be white, grey, or black but exhibit strange tints. After selecting the feature, click onto the area of the image that is meant to be neutral and all the colours of the image will be changed to make the area free from any colour cast. The Remove Color Cast feature works particularly well when there are grey or black areas in the scene. Some photographers include a grey card in the corner of shots that they know are going to have a cast in anticipation of using Remove Color Cast.

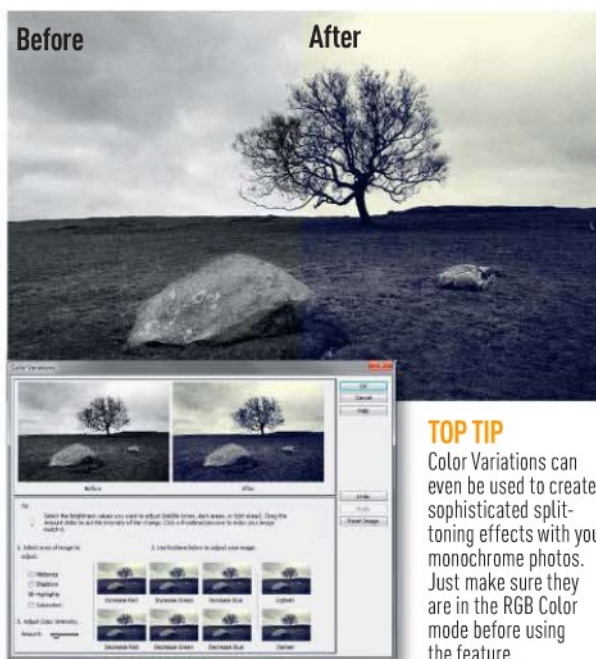




### A LITTLE MORE COLOUR CONTROL

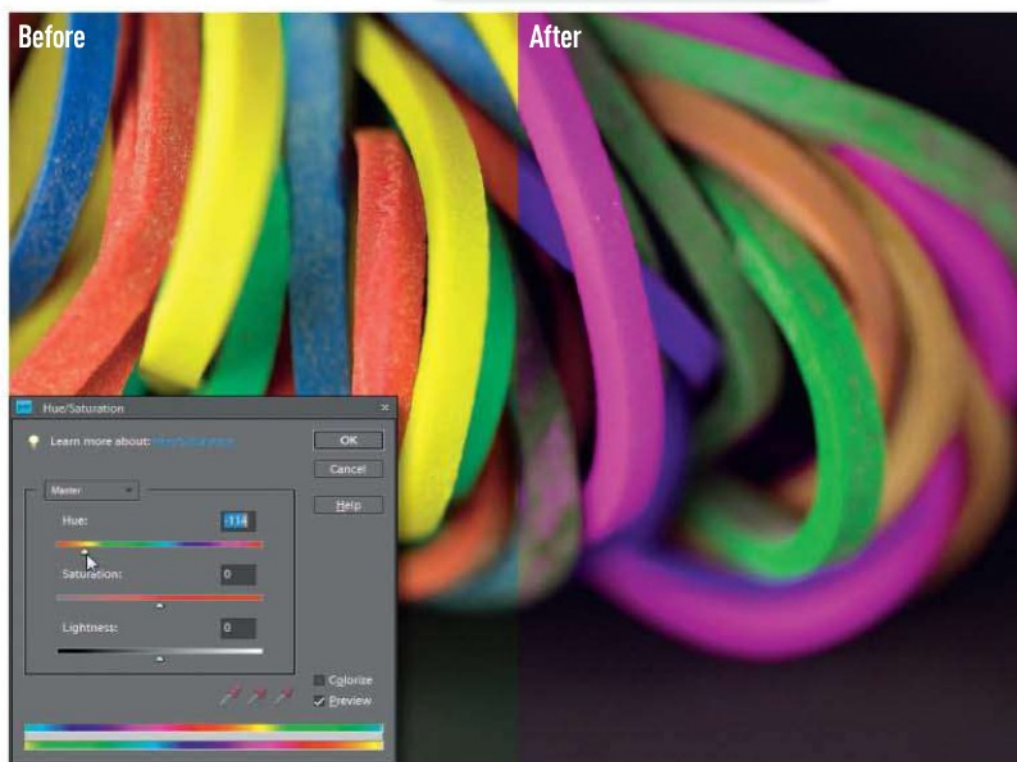
An alternative to using Remove Color Cast is the Color Variations feature (see window on right). This is divided into four parts. The top of the dialogue contains two thumbnails that represent how your image looked before and after changes have been applied. The buttons in section 1 (middle left) allow the user to select the parts of the image they wish to alter. In this way, highlights, midtones and shadows can all be adjusted independently. The Amount slider in section 2 (bottom left) controls the strength of the colour changes. The final part, section 3 (bottom right), is taken up with six colour and two brightness preview images. These represent how your picture will look with specific colours added or when the picture is brightened or darkened. Clicking on any of these thumbnails will change the 'after' picture by adding the colour chosen.

To add a colour to your image, click on a suitably coloured thumbnail. To remove a colour, click on its opposite.



#### TOP TIP

Color Variations can even be used to create sophisticated split-toning effects with your monochrome photos. Just make sure they are in the RGB Color mode before using the feature.



### CHANGING COLOURS AND ALTERING THEIR STRENGTH

To understand how the Hue/Saturation feature works, you need to think of the colours in an image in a slightly different way. Rather than using the three-colour model (red, green and blue) with which we are familiar, the Hue/Saturation control breaks the image into the components of Hue (colour), Saturation (colour strength), and Lightness (HSL).

The dialogue itself displays slider controls for each component, allowing them to be changed independently. Moving the Hue control along the slider changes the dominant colour of the image. From left to right, the hue's changes are represented in much the same way as colours in a rainbow.

Alterations made here can be dramatic and the results are often unrealistic, so care is required. Moving the Saturation slider to the left gradually decreases the strength of the colour until the image is reduced to just grey tones. In contrast, adjusting it to the right increases the purity of the hue and produces images that are vibrant and dramatic. The Lightness slider changes the density of the image and works in the same way as the Brightness slider in the Brightness/Contrast feature. You can use this control to make slight adjustments when a colour change darkens or lightens the midtones of an image, but more critical brightness changes should be made using the Levels dialogue.

#### TOP TIP

By ticking the Colorize option and then moving the Hue control, it is possible to simulate sepia or blue-toned prints. The option converts a coloured image to a monochrome image made up of a single dominant colour and black & white.

**'Some people include a grey card in the corner of shots that they know are going to have a cast in anticipation of using Remove Color Cast'**

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And He said  
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*step into the light... elemental*





# AP INFORMER

**i** Insider news and analysis from latest photographic shows

PMA 2010

Samsung predicts 50% share for micro-system cameras within three years

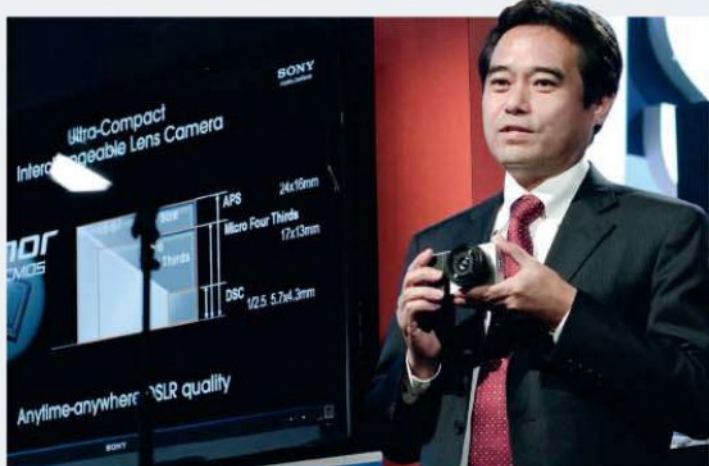
## MARKET SHIFTS TOWARDS MICRO-SYSTEM CAMERAS

**MICRO-SYSTEM** cameras were the main focus of attention at this year's Photo Marketing Association trade show in the USA. Although there were no new market-ready cameras unveiled, their development was the subject of a large number of discussions and interviews.

It is clear that the digital camera market is undergoing a significant shift towards mirrorless digital cameras that accept interchangeable lenses and have electronic viewfinders (EVFs). In fact, Panasonic has already achieved a 9.4% share of the interchangeable-lens camera market with its G-series of cameras. Furthermore, Seung Soo Park, Samsung's vice-president, strategy marketing team, digital media, believes that mirrorless, interchangeable-lens cameras will account for 50% of the market in three years' time. No surprise, then, that Samsung should use PMA to unveil five new lenses for the NX system, to complement its 14.6-million-pixel NX10.

### GOOD FOR THE MARKET

Even manufacturers such as Nikon, that have a comprehensive range of DSLR cameras and no micro-system models, claim that the move is good



Sony's Masashi Imamura introduces a prototype of the company's first micro-system camera, which will have an APS-C-sized CMOS sensor

for the market as it will draw in new photographers. However, as Nobuaki Sasagaki, Nikon's general manager, marketing department, indicates, the DSLR manufacturer will keep a very close eye on developments and consider introducing its own micro-system models.

It is noticeable, though, that the first micro-system cameras have come from manufacturers that have struggled to make a serious impact

on the DSLR market. According to Richard S Pelkowski, Olympus's DSLR product manager, USA, Olympus is focusing on its Micro Four Thirds system at the moment. He suggested that although the full-sized Four Thirds system will continue, reflex DSLRs could disappear within 24 months.

Since Panasonic launched the Lumix DMC-G1 in September 2008 Olympus, Ricoh and Samsung have also brought out micro-system cameras.

### MICRO FOUR THIRDS LENSES FROM SIGMA

**SIGMA** will produce Micro Four Thirds lenses in the future, according to CEO Michihiro Yamaki and chief operating officer Kazuto Yamaki, as they believe that micro-system cameras are set to be an important segment of the market. There is currently no time frame for their production, but Michihiro Yamaki expressed a desire to introduce small, fixed-focal-length optics with large maximum apertures. The Yamakis also confirmed Sigma's desire to produce a compact camera along the lines of the DP1 and DP2, but with interchangeable lenses.



Nissin's Four Thirds and Micro Four Thirds-compatible Di466

### MICRO ACCESSORIES TO PROLIFERATE

**AS THE** micro-system camera market grows, accessory manufacturers will come on board and offer compatible devices. Nissin, for example, has introduced a white version of its Di466 flashgun that is compatible with Micro Four Thirds cameras such as the Olympus Pen E-P1.

## DOES SONY PROTOTYPE HOLD CLUE TO NEW SMOOTH MOUNT?

**IT IS** possible that Sony is gearing up to present a new concept in lens mounting with its forthcoming Alpha mirrorless camera system. If the prototype body on show at PMA is anything to go by, the new system is set to have no mechanical locking mechanism and the lens throat is completely smooth. It may simply be that Sony doesn't want to reveal the actual mounting method yet, but when demonstrated by Masashi Imamura during a presentation, the Sony US imaging president just snapped the lenses on and off the body without twisting them – as though they are held in place with a magnetic system.

The lenses on display alongside Sony's concept camera had no



Intriguingly, Sony's concept camera has a completely smooth, bayonet-free lens mount

markings to indicate how the lens should be orientated in the mount, suggesting that it may be possible for the lens to be snapped on at any angle. Bayonet systems usually require the lens to be offered up to the camera at a specific point and then rotated to lock them in place. A simpler

'snap-on' system that avoids accidental mis-mounting could be very attractive to novice users, who are the main target audience for the concept camera.

Speculation that Sony has developed a new mounting system is further fuelled by the fact that the word 'secret' was just visible on a label stuck to the rear cap of one lens on the shelf of the Sony display cabinet.

Although at present it is only at the concept stage and there are very few details available about the camera, Sony plans for it to go on sale this year. No firm dates were given, but with the biennial photokina show taking place in September, an autumn arrival seems likely.



# FLD glass used in latest range of mass-market optics for improved performance

## SIGMA INTRODUCES FLD GLASS



**OPTICAL** performance is now the highest priority, according to Sigma's chief operating officer Kazuto Yamaki (pictured above left with CEO Mishihiro Yamaki), and although the company reportedly has no specific pixel count in mind, the new raft of lenses are claimed to be more than a match for the resolution of current DSLRs. This desire for improved performance has led Sigma and Hoya

to work together to produce the new FLD ('F' Low Dispersion) glass, which is claimed to have the aberration correction and reduced dispersion properties of fluorite without the weight and at a more affordable price.

Although Sigma has used FLD glass before, it has only appeared in bespoke lenses produced for specific applications. Three of the latest batch of five lenses from Sigma feature two

or more FLD elements, and this is the first time the manufacturer has used the glass in a mass-market optic.

While the new 8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM has four FLD elements, the 17-50mm f/2.8 EX DC OS HSM and 70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM have two each. The FLD glass was not considered necessary for the new 85mm f/1.4 EX DG HSM, and could not be slotted into the existing design for the 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM, which, like the 70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM, adds Sigma's Optical Stabilizer system to an existing optic to extend the safe handholdable shutter speed by (Sigma claims) up to four stops.

### LENS HOOD DESIGN

Sigma has also rethought how lens hoods are used. Two of the new optics, the 70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM and 85mm f/1.4 EX DG HSM, which produce an image circle that covers full-frame sensors and 35mm film, are supplied with an adapter that is designed for use when the lenses are fitted on a APS-C-format camera.

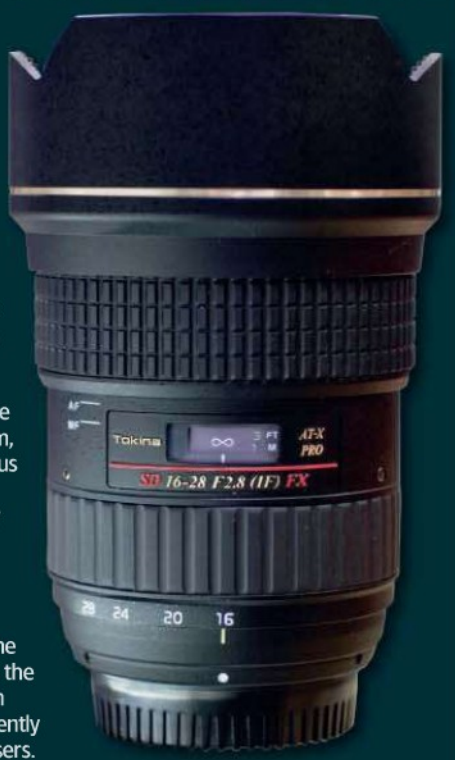
This provides added protection for the centre portion of the image circle of the lens that is important with smaller format cameras.

An adapter isn't necessary, or practical, with very long telephoto optics like the 50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM, as the light rays enter the lens at a narrower angle than they do with shorter focal-length lenses.



## TOKINA TO RELEASE WIDE ZOOM

**TOKINA** is set to introduce a 16-28mm f/2.8 zoom (pictured) for full-frame digital cameras at the end of the summer, according to distributor Kenro. The ATX-Pro-designated lens will feature an internal focusing system, and a push/pull AF/MF focus ring action. The lens will be produced in all popular mounts, including Sony Alpha. All Tokina lenses will now be available for Alpha users, Kenro's Paul Kench told AP, including the 11-16mm f/2.8 zoom and the forthcoming 16.5-135mm f/3.5-5.6 ATX, which currently is only on sale for Nikon users.



## CAMERAS GET BAGS OF SUPPORT

**A NEW** series of bags with built-in camera supports could be about to make life easier for photographers keen on hiking. The new KlikStand series from Klik Elite comprises three bags, each with a built-in powder-coated aluminium frame that tips forward onto its pull-out stand. A pair of bars (or feet) can also be swung out to give the pack extra stability. The extending mounting bar can be pulled up to almost double the height of the pack and a threaded mount provides an attachment

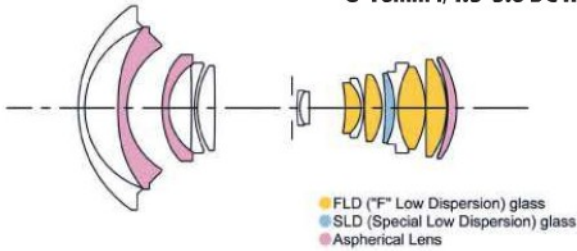
point for a camera, a tripod head or a lighting head.

While the KlikStand bags provide support when they are on the ground, the BodyLink Telephoto Pack (pictured) has an extendable camera support that can be used with the bag across the photographer's chest. The bag can hold a DSLR with a lens mounted and may be worn as a rucksack on the back or chest. Visit [www.klikelite.com](http://www.klikelite.com) for details.

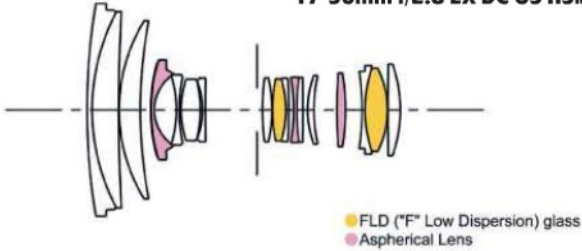




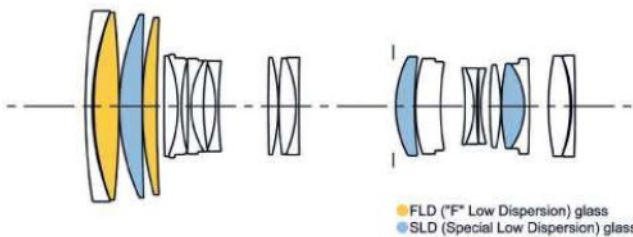
8-16mm f/4.5-5.6 DC HSM



17-50mm f/2.8 EX DC OS HSM



70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM



# HASSELBLAD LAUNCHES TRUE FOCUS



**A NEW** focusing system that automatically corrects shift in recomposed images is set to come to the aid of wide-aperture Hasselblad users. Called True Focus, and incorporated into the company's new H4D camera, the system is designed to compensate for the shift in focus that occurs typically when a central AF point is used to focus on a part of the subject and then the image is recomposed. Often, when a shallow depth of field is in use, the focus plane

will swivel as the camera is tilted and will fall behind the desired focus point. True Focus uses a pair of sensors in the camera body that can detect the angle of camera movement after the original act of focusing and, using lens, aperture and subject distance information, then determine the amount of focus compensation that will be required.

The Hasselblad H4D is available now in 40 and 50-million-pixel versions, with kit prices starting from £14,500.



# NIKON REVEALS FUTURE PLANS

**WE CAN** expect to see many new lenses from Nikon during 2010, according to Nobuaki Sasagaki (pictured left), the company's marketing department general manager, who was talking about Nikon's plans in an exclusive interview with AP's Damien Demolder and Angela Nicholson. Although there will be lenses to satisfy those who have been requesting fast, wideangle optics, this isn't the sole focus of Nikon's attention. We can expect a range of lenses, with both fixed-focal-length and zoom optics being planned.

When quizzed about the inclusion of Vibration Reduction (VR) technology in the new 16-35mm VR f/4 G ED VR, Sasagaki said that VR was now advanced enough to make it of benefit to wideangle optics. He claims that it enables the camera to be handheld at shutter speeds as low as 1/2sec when the new lens is mounted.

Although Nikon is leading the way with low-light capability and noise control in its DSLRs, this is just one area that Nikon is working on. According to Sasagaki, Nikon is aiming to make its DSLRs more versatile. When asked how high, in theory,

sensitivity settings could go, he said he didn't know, but if users demanded it Nikon will push higher than the ISO 102,600 maximum of the D3S. However, with compact cameras Nikon aims to 'inject more fun' so users get more enjoyment out of their Coolpix camera photography. There will also be DSLR and Coolpix models with Wi-Fi capability in the near future.

Image quality comes at the top of the list of requirements for high-end Nikon compact cameras, followed by small size, low weight, a good level of control and a raw shooting mode. A wideangle lens is a common request for the higher end compact cameras, but Nikon doesn't consider a model with a larger sensor a priority.

## MICRO-SYSTEM CAMERAS

Sasagaki also told us that Nikon is watching developments in the world of Micro Four Thirds and micro-system cameras closely, and a small mirrorless camera with an EVF could be considered in the future. However, this is just one option that is being considered and the manufacturer is making advances in producing smaller DSLRs with optical viewfinders.



## Enthusiast photographers targeted with sub-£400, ten-million-pixel model SAMSUNG UPS BRAND WITH TOP-END COMPACT

**SAMSUNG'S** desire to be taken seriously as a camera brand took a theoretical step in the right direction at the recent PMA show, with the announcement of a high-end compact camera aimed squarely at enthusiast photographers. The Samsung EX1, due out in April priced £399, will feature a super-fast maximum aperture, raw capture, dual-image stabilisation and a swivel screen. A maximum aperture range of f/1.8-2.4 in a 24-72mm Schneider-Kreuznach-labelled zoom lens is certain to attract attention, as will the 3in AMOLED articulated screen.

The camera will be fitted with a hotshoe on the top plate that will be compatible with the SEF42A and SEF20A flash units launched to accompany the NX10. The larger-than-usual 1/1.7in sensor bears more than a passing resemblance to that used in Canon's PowerShot G11, with ten million pixels and VGA video recording.

Samsung will be hoping that the retro styling and high build quality will help the brand span the gap between its usual compact market and the sub-DSLR micro-system camera



market it is approaching with the NX range of interchangeable-lens bodies. Since the GX series of DSLRs, Samsung has not had a top-end product, and the company wants to establish credibility in the

enthusiast market ahead of further developments in the NX series.

To bolster the NX system, the company also announced a further five lenses to bring the list of NX optics to eight. The new lenses include a

20mm f/2.8 pancake and a 60mm f/2.7 macro, which will appeal to more advanced users, as well as three zooms – a 20-50mm f/3.5-5.6, an 18-55mm non-OIS f/3.5-5.6 and an 18-200mm OIS f/3.5-6.3.

## CAMERA RESOLUTIONS TRIGGER LENS IMPROVEMENTS

**MANUFACTURERS** are having to improve the optical performance of their lenses to meet the demands of high pixel-count cameras now that 24-million-pixel models such as the Nikon D3X, Sony Alpha 850 and Alpha 900 are available. In addition to the introduction of performance-enhancing FLD glass elements by Sigma, we are set to see improved optics from Tamron and Nikon, with Tamron planning to improve the glass in its lenses over the next year.

In an interview with AP's Damien Demolder and Angela Nicholson, Nobuaki Sasagaki, Nikon's marketing department general manager, said that Nikon will be putting a lot of effort

into its lenses over the coming year and that we can expect to see a new range arriving. In addition, some lenses will be followed by

camera firmware upgrades to enable them to apply the correct level of vignetting correction.

Sigma CEO Mishihiro Yamaki told AP that the company's novel FLD glass will appear in new lenses as optics are introduced. He went on to say that two of the biggest optical problems are ghosting and flare, which are caused by light bouncing around inside the lens or even reflecting off the sensor surface. Although lens coatings can go some way to combating these issues they are just one option, as internal baffles and extended lens hoods can also help cut out stray light.



## BACKLIT SENSORS BEAT NOISE

**'BACKLIT'** imaging sensors are increasingly being employed to help reduce imaging noise in cameras. In use in current models from the Canon, Casio, Fuji, Nikon, Samsung and Sony ranges, backlit sensors are effectively sensors that have their structure vertically reversed so that the sensitive areas of the device sit closer to the surface while the wiring and support components sit below. With less to block the passage of light, these sensors are claimed to be twice as efficient at gathering light than normal sensors, and in theory produce half the amount of noise at any given ISO setting. Sensors seem limited to ten million pixels and the CMOS type at the moment.

At PMA Samsung launched the EX1 (see above), which uses a backlit CMOS sensor.







## FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAS EVERYTHING...

### MINI SD PROJECTOR

**SUNPAK** USA is introducing an SD card-compatible mini-projector (see picture, top) that is designed to go in a pocket or a camera bag. With a brightness of ten lumens it rates alongside the Nikon Coolpix S1000pj camera projector, but is powerful enough to make an image of up to 40in across the diagonal. The unit has a built-in two-hour battery, 128MB of internal memory, a 200:1 contrast range and VGA resolution. It is available now at \$250 (around £165). At the time of writing we couldn't find the UK distributor.

### FORE!

**A GENIUS** idea for photographers who also love golf, the LogoJet Express 24 allows printing onto plastics, wood, metals and ceramics, and comes with a tray that holds up to 24 golf balls (see picture, above left). Custom software allows images to be cropped and placed over virtual balls on-screen and, once the balls

are treated with a sizing spray, the pictures are printed with oil-based inks onto the balls. Including printing and drying, the process takes about ten minutes. The downside is that the printer costs \$10,000 (around £6,600), but it's great fun all the same. Visit [www.logojet.ca](http://www.logojet.ca) for more information.

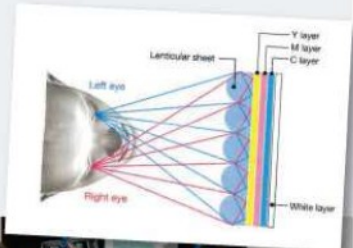
### ANNIE, GET YOUR CAMERA

**A RANGE** of leather handmade camera cases and holsters (see picture, above right) was on show at PMA made by US company Skytop. The cases, which fit to belts or hang on their own straps, are made from 'premium full-grain leather' and come in a series of designs to fit specific camera models. The company offers holsters in brown or black finishes, and with hand-worked patterns for an extra charge. A new range of material-clad EVA vinyl cases will be available from the end of the summer. Prices for leather cases start at \$282 (around £186). Visit [www.cameraholster.com](http://www.cameraholster.com) for details.

## 3D PRINTER IN ACTION

**FUJIFILM'S** forthcoming dye-sublimation printer, which is designed for its 3D camera system, will print onto clear sheets of plastic lenticular material, according to Katsuya Makioka (pictured below), from Fuji's product planning division. Due to arrive in the UK this summer, a dummy of the printer was on show at PMA. Printing on the clear material, the printer will apply the usual cyan, magenta and yellow inks, but with the addition of a white layer to create a base. The finished prints are slightly transparent and will be able to be displayed backlit. As well as printing

images from 3D cameras, the printer and software are designed to create composites of normal 2D images on a 3D background. Fuji expects the machine to be used mostly by event and theme-park photographers, but AP hopes a domestic version will eventually become available.



## RICOH UNVEILS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**RICOH** is committed to making a success of its GXR system. This was the message spelt out by Kazunobu Saiki (pictured right), Ricoh Europe's general manager, in an exclusive interview with AP's Damien Demolder and Angela Nicholson. In addition to announcing two lens units that will go on sale later this year (see *News*, AP 13 March), Mr Saiki told AP that he considers a minimum of one extra lens unit and one functional unit (for example, a projector or hard drive) every six months to be essential in maintaining the GXR system. Also, Ricoh will not be limiting itself to in-house technology for the functional units and is consulting other manufacturers about developments.

A lens unit that contains a sensor and a lens mount, perhaps to accept Leica M, Micro Four Thirds or Pentax K-mount lenses, is also being given serious thought. Saiki stated that a full-frame camera unit is technically possible, but it would be expensive.

Saiki explained that Ricoh is investigating devices that could extend the functionality of the system,



and hard disk, printer and projector units that attach to the GXR back are already under study. A remote-control unit, using wired or wireless technology, is also a possibility.

Saiki believes the GXR system is a viable alternative to both DSLR and Micro Four Thirds cameras, and that it provides a solution for those who want a small, light camera. He sees the fact that the lens is built specifically to work in harmony with the sensor in a sealed, dust-free environment as a key benefit. He also believes that making the operation the same regardless of the camera unit in use is something many photographers will appreciate.



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# Sony Alpha 450

As a pared-down version of the Alpha 550, is Sony's latest DSLR, the **Alpha 450**, the right choice for enthusiast photographers on a budget? We put it to the test

**Richard Sibley**  
Technical Writer



**AFTER** almost four years in the DSLR camera market, Sony is no longer the new kid on the block. In fact, during this time the company has released 13 DSLR models, a quantity matched only by Canon and Nikon. However, when Sony brought Konica Minolta's DSLR division in 2006, it inherited just two KM cameras: the Dynax 5D and 7D. It then took a while for Sony to get up

and running. Its first camera, the Alpha 100, inherited much of its technology from the Dynax 5D, and it wasn't until more than a year later that the company announced its second DSLR, the impressive Alpha 700.

As the Sony Alpha lens mount is identical to that of Konica Minolta (the latter was, in fact, known as the Alpha mount in the Far East), existing Konica Minolta users were extremely happy to learn that there would be new cameras to which they could upgrade and still use their existing lenses. Sony, however, had set its sights a lot higher. With its huge global brand name and a strong background in compact and video cameras, the company has since tried to

## AT A GLANCE

### SONY ALPHA 450 ENTHUSIAST-LEVEL DSLR

- 14.2-million-pixel CMOS sensor
- SteadyShot Inside image stabilisation
- 7fps speed priority mode
- In-camera HDR images
- Street price around £440 (body only)

establish itself as a viable alternative to Canon and Nikon, particularly at the entry-level and enthusiast end of the market.

Realising that it could use its strong branding and existing consumer loyalty to entice first-time DSLR users to the Alpha system, Sony now has no fewer than eight DSLR models listed on its website, with all but two aimed at entry or enthusiast-level photographers. Of this range, the Alpha 450 is the newest, announced at the beginning of January.

With so many of the Alpha cameras sharing the same features, it can be confusing when trying to decide which model to buy. The Alpha 450 is aimed squarely at the enthusiast photographer on a budget, and it is probably best to think of it as a slimmed-down version of the existing Alpha 550. Both cameras share the same 14.2-million-pixel, APS-C-sized sensor and a speed priority mode that offers a shooting rate of 7fps. However, the Alpha 450 lacks the Quick AF Live View mode of its stablemate, as well as its accompanying tilting screen.

With the Alpha 450 priced at around £100 less than the





Alpha 550, it is currently the most affordable of Sony's three 14-million-pixel DSLRs. With in-camera HDR and dynamic-range optimisation features included, the Alpha 450 looks as though it could be a great choice for the developing enthusiast photographer on a budget.

## FEATURES

The Sony Alpha 450 uses a 14.2-million-pixel CMOS APS-C-size sensor to capture images. This sensor was first used on the Alpha 350, and has since been included in the Alpha 380 and Alpha 550 cameras. Image processing is handled by Sony's Bionz processing system, which is found in all its cameras. This enables the use of such features as in-camera dynamic-range optimisation and the in-camera creation of HDR images, but more on these later.

Unlike Canon and Nikon, which uses lens-based image stabilisation, Sony makes use of an in-camera, sensor-based system known as SteadyShot Inside. The advantage of this is that camera shake can be prevented in all images regardless of which lens is used. The downside, however, is that the effects of sensor-based stabilisation cannot be seen in the viewfinder when shooting. To help get around this problem, Sony has included a SteadyShot scale indicator, which is displayed in the viewfinder and measures how much the camera is moving while in use, allowing the user to time when best to press the shutter to capture a blur-free image.

Having inherited much of its technology from Konica Minolta, Sony therefore uses the same lens mount on its DSLRs, although it is now known as the Alpha mount. It is a credit to Sony that there is already a full complement of lenses available to accompany its cameras. Better still, the company has Carl Zeiss designing and producing a range of high-quality lenses to accompany its own high-end G and standard series of lenses. Sony also holds an 11% share in Tamron, and it is reasonable to expect that some of its lenses are designed and produced in association with this firm.

When it comes to saving images, the Sony Alpha 450 can use either Sony's own Duo Memory stick or the more common SD/HC card. It is also possible to view images on a television via the Alpha 450's HDMI cable socket.

If you are fortunate enough to own a Sony Bravia television with HDMI input, you can take advantage of the fact that each image file produced by the Alpha 450 has a built-in preview image. The size, colour and contrast of these preview images are specifically designed to be viewed on Bravia televisions.

One of the more interesting features of the Alpha 450 is the speed priority shooting mode. This allows up to seven frames per second to be captured, but it sacrifices focusing between shots. Consequently, the mode is only really suitable for subjects with a restricted zone of movement. For example, a footballer could move completely



**I found that the multi-segment evaluative metering of the Alpha 450 tends to bias towards preventing blown-out highlights. This can cause very dark shadow areas, but in this image it has produced a good exposure**

in and out of focus across seven shots, but a tennis player about to hit a ball will be positioned on roughly the same spot throughout, so if a small enough aperture is used a good level of focus should remain.

When in the standard continuous high shooting rate, the Alpha 450 is capable of an impressive 5fps for 32 JPEGs, 14 raw images or seven raw + JPEG images.

In all, the Alpha 450 is a well-specified camera for its price. Although it lacks a few bells and whistles, there are enough features included, such as in-camera stabilisation and a fast shooting rate to satisfy the needs of enthusiasts.

**7/10**

## BUILD AND HANDLING

As you would expect, the Alpha 450 bears more than a passing resemblance to the Alpha 550. The differences between them largely come down to the extra buttons and controls on the latter for using Quick AF Live View and the tilting screen. So similar are the two cameras that it appears the smaller non-tilting screen of the Alpha 450 has simply had a plastic surround added so that it slots perfectly into the space required for the larger tilting screen of the Alpha 550.

The body of the Alpha 450 is plastic with a metal lens mount, but it is well put together. Even so, it has what can only be described as a 'plasticky' feel to it, perhaps due to the smooth rather than textured body, and because it is slightly larger (though lighter) than some of its competitors.

One part of the body that is textured

is the large grip. With a rubber coating and contoured design, it is extremely comfortable to hold and the shape of the grip guides the forefinger naturally to rest on the shutter-release button.

Like other entry-level and enthusiast Alpha cameras, there is no rear control dial, only a single front control. This is generally not a problem – most other cameras at this level have only a single front control. However, there are a few buttons on the camera that could be better positioned. For example, annoyingly, the ISO button is on the camera's top plate in no-man's-land, where it's too far from the shutter button to be easily pressed with your forefinger and too far from the rear of the camera to get at it easily with your thumb. The result is that it is awkward to change the ISO sensitivity single-handedly.

The menu button is positioned at the top left of the rear of the camera, which makes it easy to reach with your left thumb when holding the camera. However, it would have been better placed in the position occupied by the AF button – that is, in the centre of the cursor control dial. Similarly, the playback and delete buttons would be better positioned at the top left of the rear of the camera, replacing the menu and display options. It is likely that you would be using both hands to review your captured images, and locating the buttons here would make it easier to search through and delete images.

Most of the key shooting settings can be found by pressing the Fn button on the rear of the camera. The only option I found that couldn't be changed in this shooting menu was the image quality, which is changed in the main menu. This was a mild annoyance when I wanted to change from shooting raw + JPEG files to JPEGs alone, which would allow the HDR mode to be used.

There is nothing particularly restrictive about the build or handling of the Alpha 450 – it is just that a tweak here and there would have speeded up and improved its overall handling.

**7/10**

## VIEWFINDER, LCD AND LIVE VIEW

Surrounded by a large rubber eyepiece, the Alpha 450's viewfinder offers 80% magnification and a 95% field of view. This is a fairly typical specification for a DSLR at this level, and while I found the viewfinder fine for framing subjects, accuracy when focusing manually through the viewfinder was a little hit and miss. As with most DSLRs, I found myself using the focus confirmation in the viewfinder to confirm I had manually focused correctly. This somewhat defeats the purpose of manually focusing in the first place, as relying on the confirmation produces the same result as the AF.

One of the major compromises made in the Alpha 450 is the LCD screen. The 3in tilting screen currently fitted to the Alpha 550 has gone, only to be replaced with a somewhat lacklustre 230,400-dot, 2.7in screen. It is the same LCD screen as that



fitted to the Alpha 380, 330 and 230 cameras, which are lower down the range thus reinforcing the Alpha 450's position as above these three models but below the Alpha 500 and 550.

As I mentioned earlier, Sony's unique Quick AF Live View system isn't featured in the Alpha 450, which is another major difference between this camera and the Alpha 550. The Quick AF system uses a secondary sensor in the viewfinder to produce the Live View image, which means that uninterrupted phase-detection autofocus can be used when shooting in this mode. Live View is still present in the Alpha 450, but contrast-detection AF is not. This means that Live View must be interrupted

while the usual phase-detection focusing takes place, before the Live View image returns to the screen. A further annoyance is that, having released the shutter and captured an image, the Live View does not automatically restart.

With its somewhat restrictive nature, Sony has named the feature Manual Focus Check Live View, with the obvious intention of it being used solely for the purpose of checking manual focusing. When used in this manner it performs well, with 1x, 7x and 14x magnification views to allow the focus to be checked at particular points in an image.

I rarely use Live View modes, and when I do it is usually only to check that I have manually focused correctly. The only

exception to this is when I am using a Sony DSLR that features the Quick AF Live View. Taking this into consideration, it is a shame that the superior Live View system has been sacrificed to bring the camera in at a lower price point, although I found the omission to have little overall effect on how I would use the camera.

7/10

### AUTOFOCUS

With nine AF points, the Alpha 450 utilises the same AF system found in all Sony's current APS-C-format DSLR cameras. The centre AF point is a cross-type sensor, which means

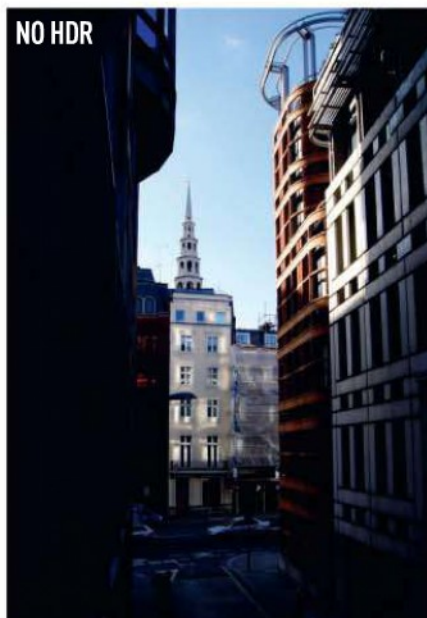


## FEATURE IN USE IN-CAMERA HDR

**HIGH** dynamic range (HDR) images have been popular for some time. Until recently, we have only seen dynamic range optimisation effects in DSLRs. However, Pentax and now Sony have introduced fully fledged HDR imaging in the cameras themselves.

In the Alpha 450, the HDR feature is available in the D-Range menu. The camera takes two exposures in quick succession with a single press of the shutter release and each image has a different exposure. It then processes and combines these two images into one final processed image that merges the highlight detail from the darker image and the shadow detail from the lighter image.

In the Alpha 450, you can specify an exposure difference between the two images of between 1EV and 3EV, at intervals of 0.5EV. Alternatively, you can let the camera automatically decide the exposure for you. The greater the difference in EV between the two images, the more dramatic the HDR effect. For example, for a subtle lifting of shadow areas you may wish to use the 1EV setting, but to produce an image where much



The HDR mode also works in black & white mode. Set to +3EV, the Houses of Parliament have taken on a slightly etched appearance



of the image is nearly a midtone you would be better off using the 3EV setting.

The HDR effect can be used handheld as the camera aligns the images as best it can during the processing stage. Of course, if the camera or something in the image moves, the processing won't be able to align the image accurately and the result is a ghosted effect. For this reason, it is always advisable to use a tripod if your images require a slow shutter speed.

As the HDR image is a processed effect it can only be applied to JPEG images and not raw files. This presents a number of possibilities for creating some interesting in-camera effects. For example, you can set the image style to vivid and the effect to its maximum 3EV setting to produce a bold and bright picture. It also works with black & white images. Used at its minimum setting of 1EV, it can be used almost as fill light, or for effectively dodging the shadow areas of an image. At its maximum strength, images are very flat in terms of contrast and look like etchings.



it can autofocus across both the horizontal and vertical axes for more accurate focusing. When using this centre AF point in good light with the standard 18–55mm f/3.5–5.6 SAM kit lens, I found the focusing to be fast, snappy and comparable with the equivalent Canon and Nikon cameras.

However, the Alpha 450 struggles a little in low light. On a few occasions it actually seemed to give up, at which point the camera would not let me press the shutter released to take a photograph as the lens wasn't focused. It was a little frustrating, to say the least.

The problem isn't helped by the fact that there is no AF Assist illumination in the same way as other manufacturers have adopted it. Rather than employing a powerful LED on the front of the camera to act as an AF assist beam, the Sony Alpha 450 uses its flash bulb to strobe rapidly. While this is fine inasmuch as it does its job, it doesn't work automatically. For example, in aperture-priority mode you must first pop the flash up for the AF Assist to work. However, with the flash popped up, the Flash Off menu option becomes disabled, so the flash must be used to take the image. In auto exposure mode, the flash does automatically pop up and the AF Assist facility automatically activates. You also have the option to turn the flash off, but if you do so you cannot then use the AF Assist.

The result is that, if you don't want your low-light images to use flash, you have three options: either to choose your focus point carefully, focus manually, or use the AF Assist and then hold the focus point by switching to manual focus and then popping the flash back down. None of these options is ideal, and I can't help but think that a light could have easily been fitted and would most probably use far less battery life than the strobing of the flash bulb.

For me, Sony's Eye-Start AF is like Marmite: you either love it or hate it. Two sensors under the viewfinder start the autofocus as soon as the viewfinder is held up to the eye. I find it extremely useful when set to centre-point focus and I am shooting moving subjects. However, it is annoying when you are walking along and the eyepiece rubs against your hip, activating the AF and in turn wasting battery life. I tend to leave the Eye-Start AF turned off unless I need it for a specific situation.

Generally, the AF of the Alpha 450 works well in most situations, but it is again a little sluggish when photographing moving objects. I found that in this situation I got the best results in AF-C mode with the Wide AF point setting.

**6/10**

## DYNAMIC RANGE

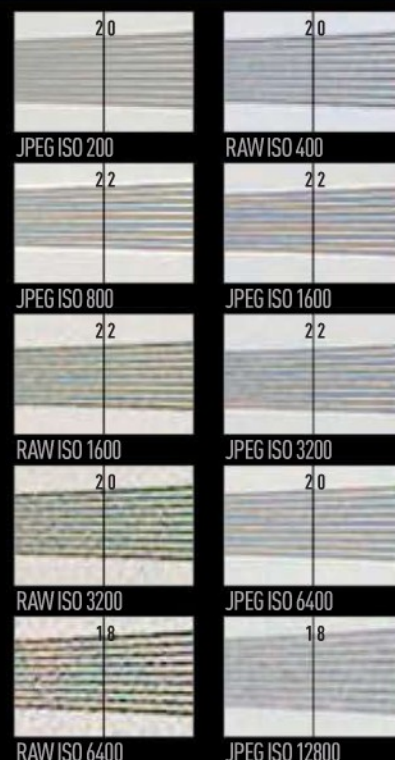
Unfortunately, we weren't able to measure the dynamic range results for the Sony Alpha 450 at the time of going to press. Having studied the images I have taken using the camera, though, I would suggest that it has a dynamic range of around 11EV. The Sony Alpha

# Facts & figures



RRP	Around £440 (body only)
Sensor	14.2 million effective pixels CMOS sensor
Output size	4592x3056 pixels
Focal length mag	1.5x
Lens mount	Sony Alpha (Minolta A-type)
File format	Raw, JPEG, raw + JPEG simultaneously
Compression	Two-stage JPEG
Colour space	Adobe RGB, sRGB
Shutter type	Electronically controlled, vertical-traverse focal-plane shutter
Shutter speeds	30-1/4000sec in 1/3EV steps plus bulb
Max flash sync	1/160sec
ISO	ISO 200-12,800
Exposure modes	Auto, program, aperture priority, shutter priority, manual, 7 scene modes
Metering system	40-segment honeycomb-pattern SPC metering, centreweighted and spot
Exposure comp	±2EV in 1/3EV steps
White balance	Auto, 6 presets, plus custom setting and Kelvin adjustment
White balance bracket	Yes – over 3 frames, 2 selectable steps
Drive mode	5fps or 7fps in Speed Priority mode, but AF and AE fixed at start of sequence, for 32 Fine or 116 JPEG images, 14 raw images or 7 raw + JPEG images
LCD	2.7in LCD with 230,400 dots
Viewfinder type	Penta-Dach mirror with tilt mechanism
Field of view	Approx 95%
Dioptr adjustment	-2.5 to +1 dioptre
Focusing modes	Manual, single-shot AF, automatic AF, continuous AF
AF points	9 (with centre-cross sensor) individually selectable points, auto or manual selection possible
DoF preview	No
Built-in flash	Yes – GN 12m @ ISO 100
Memory card	SD, SDHC or MemoryStick Duo
Power	Rechargeable Li-Ion battery
Connectivity	USB 2.0 Hi-Speed
Weight	520g without battery or card/s
Dimensions	137x104x81mm

**SONY UK** The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XL. Tel: 01932 816 000. [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)



These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured using matching 105mm macro lenses. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution is at the specified sensitivity setting.

## RESOLUTION, NOISE AND SENSITIVITY

Oddly, the Alpha 450's images of our resolution chart resolve slightly more detail at ISO 800 than at ISO 200 and 400. With the camera on a tripod and a 10sec self-timer used, there is a slight blur at lower sensitivities. Images look sharper as the sensitivity, and shutter speed, are increased, so it would appear that mirror slap is causing the slight blur. Sadly, the Alpha 450 has no mirror lock-up setting to counter this. After ISO 800 the detail resolution of raw and JPEG images incrementally drops until, at about ISO 3200, it reaches 20 on our chart, which is still impressive. By the time the maximum sensitivity of ISO 12,800 is reached, the Alpha 450 still manages to resolve detail to nearly 18 on our chart, although there is a noticeable softening in JPEG files due to the effects of noise reduction.

Overall, noise is well controlled and barely noticeable until about ISO 800. At this point luminance and colour noise are just starting to creep into the image. Luminance noise does not become much of an issue in well-exposed areas until ISO 6400, but both colour and luminance noise are noticeable and a little problematic in shadow areas, particularly if you try to lighten them.

**26/30**



## FOCAL POINTS

### Eye-Start AF

These two sensors above the viewfinder detect when the camera is held to the eye and can then be set to activate the camera's autofocus

### D-Range

Pressing the D-Range button allows you to set the dynamic-range optimisation and HDR features

### Screen

The Alpha 450's LCD screen only measures 2.7in and is fixed in position, unlike the tiltable screen of the Alpha 550



Camera shown actual size

### Function button

The Function or Fn button enables all the main shooting settings to be accessed quickly

### Wireless flash

Like nearly all other enthusiast DSLR cameras, the Alpha 450 has an in-camera flash. However, there is an advantage in the Sony camera in that it is capable of acting as a wireless flash controller for compatible Sony flashguns, such as the Sony HVL-F58AM.

### Hotshoe

The Alpha 450's hotshoe is the proprietary Sony/Minolta fit. It is worth bearing this in mind if you intend to use an existing flash that takes a standard hotshoe fit. An adapter is available for converting the flash mount to a standard hotshoe fit, in the form of the Sony FA-HS1AM.

### Software

Like all other Sony DSLRs, the Alpha 450 comes with Sony Image Data Suite, which includes Image Lightbox and Image Data Converter, allowing both JPEG and raw images to be organised and edited. It is available for PC and Mac, but the PC version runs much more smoothly.

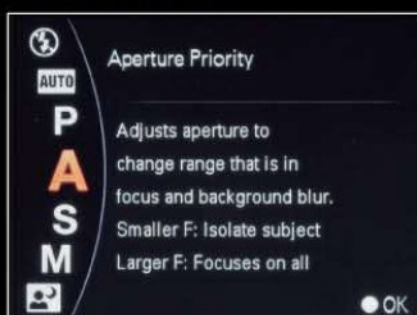
### Battery Life

The loss of the Quick AF system and larger screen does have one benefit: the same NP-FM500H battery that is used to power the Alpha 550 can now take an extra 100 shots in the Alpha 450.

### Graphic information screen



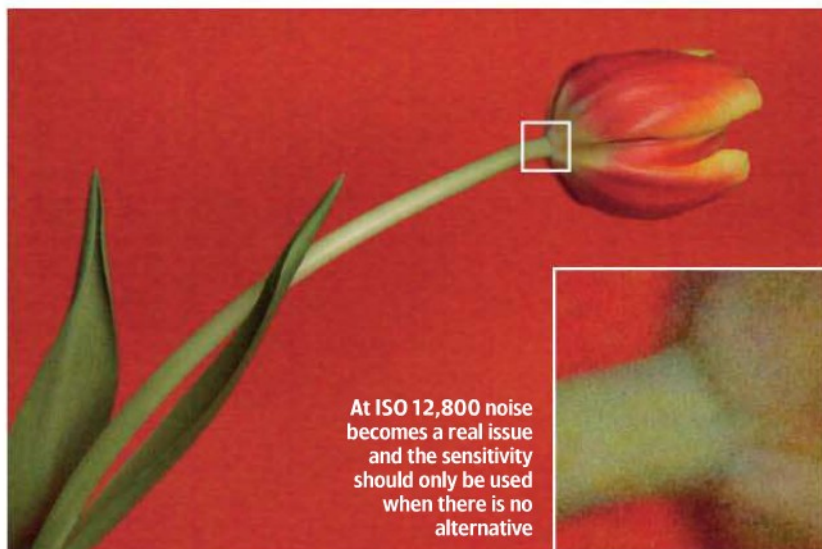
### Mode selection screen



### Live View mode screen







At ISO 12,800 noise becomes a real issue and the sensitivity should only be used when there is no alternative

380 uses the same 14.2-million-pixel sensor and measured 10.5EV in our dynamic range test, so it would be logical to conclude that the Alpha 450 is going to be about the same, if not better. We will, of course, print the results as soon as we have them.

There are a whole host of dynamic range (D-Range in Sony speak) options available on the Alpha 450. These can be accessed directly by pressing the D-Range button on the top of the camera.

The D-Range Optimizer (DRO) has featured, in one form or another, in every Sony DSLR since the Alpha 700 of 2007. The version featured in the Alpha 450 has both DRO auto and manual modes. The latter lets you choose the strength of the dynamic range optimisation, ranging from one to five.

Each level adjusts the highlights and shadows in an image to give the effect that the dynamic range has actually been increased. At the minimum setting the effect is quite subtle, but by level five shadows are lifted and highlights are reduced – so much so, in fact, that images take on an HDR-like effect. The downside is that the level of noise in the shadow areas is also increased. I found that the best results came from setting the DRO at around level two or three, to help lighten the shadows just a little without making the effect too extreme.

Another option in the Alpha 450's D-Range settings allows the in-camera creation of an HDR image. For more details, see *Features in use* on page 57.

9/10

## METERING

On the whole, the 40-segment metering system of the Alpha 450 performed well. In its evaluative, multi-segment metering mode, exposures are averaged across the scene, although I did find that the camera has a tendency to lean towards preventing blown-out highlights. This causes shadow areas to be particularly dark and underexposed. I found this to be especially true when faced with a bright, overcast sky. In these sorts of situations it can help to

add around +0.3–0.7EV compensation to lighten the main foreground of the image, but this is at the expense of detail in the sky.

When shooting raw images at low sensitivity settings, it is possible to recover some of these shadows without introducing too much image noise. Those photographers who primarily shoot JPEG images will benefit from using the DRO feature and setting it to help lift the shadow areas.

For more precise metering, the centre and spot modes work well. When I tested both of these against a grey card I found that they measured 130 out of 255, making them almost an exact midtone.

8/10

## WHITE BALANCE AND COLOUR

Colour accuracy is, of course, extremely important to any photographer, and I found that the Alpha 450 performs well in most situations. Its AWB setting results are accurate in overcast, bright sunlight and tungsten lighting conditions. In fact, I discovered that in bright sunlight the camera performs better in AWB than the default daylight white balance setting. Images taken with the daylight white balance look a shade too blue, and the effect becomes far worse should the sun disappear briefly behind a cloud.

Manual and custom white balance settings allow you to use a neutral target to measure the precise white balance yourself. The custom white balance in particular is easy to find in the shooting menu and, once selected, pointing the camera at a white or neutral target and firing the shutter is all that is required to record, measure and set the white balance.

Like all modern DSLRs, the Alpha 450 features a variety of different image colour settings. A favourite setting of mine involved turning up the contrast in the black & white mode as high as it would go to produce dark, brooding images. In fact, this effect was very similar in look to using a red filter when shooting on black & white film.

8/10

# Competition



Sony Alpha 550

DATE TESTED 21 NOVEMBER 2009



Canon EOS 500D

DATE TESTED 16 MAY 2009

**THE MAIN** competition for the Alpha 450 comes from its big brother, the Alpha 550. Both feature the same 14.2-million-pixel sensor, but the Alpha 550 has the better Live View system and LCD screen, as discussed in the main test.

Apart from Sony's own Alpha 550, the biggest competitor to the Alpha 450 is, in the short term at least, the Canon EOS 500D. It features a 15.1-million-pixel sensor and HD video capture, and has a current body-only street price of just £80 more than the Alpha 450. I would expect the price of the Alpha 450 to fall once it has been available for a while, but even then it will be hard for it to compete against the Canon models and potentially the next generation of Nikon DX cameras.

# Verdict

**WITH** Sony having so many cameras positioned in the entry-level and enthusiast market it might seem a little confusing, but each Alpha model attempts to fill its own niche in the market. The Alpha 450 warrants its place in the Alpha line-up by being an affordable 14.2-million-pixel camera with in-camera image stabilisation, dynamic range optimisation, HDR image creation and a 7fps shooting rate.

While I like the extra features of the Alpha 550, I don't miss them when I use the more affordable Alpha 450.

As both cameras feature the same sensor, they resolve a great deal of detail and, if images are correctly exposed, noise is well controlled up to around ISO 1600. As most photographers will rarely shoot much higher than this, the level of image noise beyond this point is acceptable, if not good.

The camera does have its quirks, such as the suspect placement of a couple of buttons and the AF illumination being tied in to the flash, but I wouldn't spend too much time dwelling on these issues as you can comfortably work with them.

If you already own an entry-level Alpha camera and are looking for a affordable upgrade, the Sony Alpha 450 could well be the camera for you.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FEATURES	7/10									
NOISE/RESOLUTION	26/30									
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10									
LCD/VIEWFINDER	7/10									
BUILD/HANDLING	7/10									
AUTOFOCUS	6/10									
METERING	8/10									
AWB/COLOUR	8/10									



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# AskAP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries

## THE NAME GAME

**Q** Often in AP you mention an 'APS-C-size' imaging sensor. I'm guessing that APS stands for Advanced Photo System, but what does the rest mean? Can you explain how these sensor sizes got their name – ideally written in a way that can be understood by those of us who have little or no knowledge about them, despite using digital cameras? **Phil Ruler**

**A** Looking into why certain sensor sizes have certain names is always a frustrating exercise. The names are usually historical, but are rarely accurate when it comes to comparing measurements. You are right that the APS-C moniker comes from the now-defunct Advanced Photo System (Classic), pioneered in the 1990s. The system allowed the user to shoot different aspect ratios on the same roll of film just by flicking a switch, one of which measured 25.1x16.7mm and was called APS-C. Digital sensors that approximate to this size are known as APS-C today, but there is some variation. Sensors in Nikon and Sony DSLRs are slightly bigger than those in Canon cameras, which, in turn, are slightly bigger than those in Pentax DSLRs.

There is also APS-H (High definition), another film aspect ratio measuring 30.2x16.7mm. Canon uses sensors in its EOS-1D-series cameras measuring 28.7x19mm, which is deemed close enough to this to warrant calling this type of chip an APS-H cropped sensor. With Olympus and Panasonic Four Thirds and Micro Four Thirds systems, things are slightly simpler. These sensors measure 18x13.5mm and the name refers to the 4:3 aspect ratio. In the compact camera world, things are even worse. You will often see sensor sizes of 1/2.5in or 1/1.8in quoted. These are named after the terminology used to categorise the various sizes of tube in old TV cameras, and bare no resemblance to the size quoted in the name. **Ian Farrell**

## INSURANCE FOR ROUND-THE-WORLD TRIP

**Q** Later this year I plan to go on a round-the-world trip for 18 months, but I'm struggling to find camera insurance that will cover me for more than 60 days outside the UK at any one time. Do you know of any companies that will insure cameras for long periods? I'm sure I can't be the only person who has come up against this problem.

**Christopher Giddings**

**A** After a quick call to some of the specialist photographic insurance specialists I can appreciate your problem, Christopher. Indeed, most will not cover equipment used abroad for more than one or two months. However, Jane Barber of the British Insurance Brokers' Association (visit [www.biba.org.uk](http://www.biba.org.uk) or call 0870 950 1790) came up with a few organisations that will provide cover. Try JBI International Insurance Brokers Ltd (call 0118 970 3781), which suggests either a backpacker's

policy or a long-stay policy (depending on your age). Both policies will cover you for the length of time you mention. Your camera gear would have to be included as a single item and there will be an increased charge for this, but it seems that cover up to £1,000 is not a problem. If you want cover beyond this amount, the underwriters will have to be contacted. Have a good trip!

**Ian Farrell**

## WIRELESS SHOOTING

**Q** I have been interested in home macro photography for some time and would like to tether my Nikon D700 to my laptop computer wirelessly. I note that a unit is available on eBay for some \$160 (around £105), but this requires extra software from Nikon. Can you recommend an alternative? **Bill Johnson**

**A** Nikon's own wireless-tethered shooting solution comes in the form of the WT4 wireless transmitter, which costs around £600 from

## ASK...

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply send your questions to: [apanswers@ipcmedia.com](mailto:apanswers@ipcmedia.com) or by post to:

**Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**

Warehouse Express. This rather bulky box attaches to your camera with a cable and clips to the user's belt. It facilitates image transfer over an existing wireless network, or directly to a computer via a so-called ad hoc connection. The unit also offers remote camera control using Nikon's optional Camera Control 2 software.

My own experience with the WT4 is a little frustrating, though. I found it quite hard to set up, although very good once operational. Have you considered normal tethered shooting with a long USB lead? Shops like PC World and Maplin sell 5m long USB cable for around £20. You then have the pick of some excellent, and quite inexpensive, software to capture the images. Have a look at DIYPhotoBits' Camera Control ([www.diyphotobits.com](http://www.diyphotobits.com)), which is available free of charge. **Ian Farrell**

## UPDATE ON 220 FILM

Ian Farrell's reply (Q&A, AP 20 February) about 220-format black & white film is correct – for now. However, Kodak announced on 5 February that it is retiring TXP-320 in both 120 and 220 formats, with no suggested alternative for the 220 version. I believe that, sadly, this does mean the end of 220 black & white film, as far as fresh stocks are concerned. **Jon Smalldon**

## BATTERY STORAGE

**Q** I read in the instruction manual of my Pentax K-7 that storing a battery fully charged for an extended period may decrease its performance. In addition, if the battery is left discharged but inside the camera it can over-discharge, which will also shorten its life. If a camera is not being used for some time, can you recommend the best way to store the battery in order to maximise its life? Indeed, in your opinion, are such precautions really necessary? **Dave Jones**

## FROM THE AP FORUM

### Expiry date debate

**gbuck asks** In January last year I bought some Fujichrome Velvia 100F with the expiry date of October 2009, intending to use this during ensuing months. However, because I was ill the film has lain dormant in a sealed plastic food container, first in a utility room cupboard (cool but not warm) and in my loft (fairly cool). It's now out of date by four months, but I'd still like to use it. Can I still use this film with normal exposure, or should I adjust the exposure by, say, 1/2 a stop or so?





**A** When storing batteries, the main thing to avoid is letting them get very flat. Lithium-Ion batteries will self-discharge over a period of months, although they are much better than other battery types at retaining charge over time. Batteries also don't like getting too hot. This can cause the migration of ions into places where they are not wanted.

My advice is to make sure that your batteries are put in their charger every three months or so, and then use them for enough time to reduce their charge below the maximum level to remove any stress that may come from being fully charged. Also, store your batteries in a cool place, although not below 5°C. When you come to use them, let them warm up first and then charge them. Finally, never let your batteries get hotter than they need to so don't store them in a hot car or in direct sunlight.

Ian Farrell



## f/AQ

### The best portrait lens

What's the best lens to use if you are photographing people? Specialist portrait lenses are usually short telephotos, and something in the 80–100mm range is ideal. Perspective is slightly compressed with these lenses, which helps to flatter your subject.

Your short telephoto lens should also let you shoot at wide apertures, isolating your subject against a blurred background. A standard kit zoom may let you shoot at f/4 or f/5.6, but by doing so you'll be working wide open, where a lens performs at its worst optically. Go for something with a maximum aperture of f/2.8 or wider and you'll be able to stop down and still shoot at f/4, maintaining image quality.

Which lens you choose to fulfil these requirements depends largely on the type of DSLR you use. Those with full-frame cameras could look at a dedicated portrait optic like an 85mm. These are available with various maximum apertures (from f/1.8 to f/1.4 and even f/1.2), depending on how much money you want to spend. Alternatively, a 100mm macro doubles up as a great portrait lens and most have a maximum aperture of f/2.8.

On the other hand, if you have a cropped-sensor DSLR, look out for a 50mm optic, which is traditionally known as a 'standard' lens. The multiplication factor of such a camera means the lens behaves more like a 75mm or 80mm optic. **Ian Farrell**

**Nod replies** Sacrifice one roll by shooting, say, ten exposures at the metered setting, ten at 1/2 a stop over and ten at 1/2 a stop under, with the last few at a full stop one way or the other (but make a note of which exposures are at which settings). Send the film off for developing and see what the results are like. You'll probably be OK at the metered settings, but it's worth the experiment since one sacrificed film could save you wasting several others.

**Roy5051 replies** I have used many outdated slide films in the past, some up to a year out of date, and all turned out fine with normal exposure and processing. They were amateur emulsions, though. Is Velvia 100F an amateur or professional film, because professional ones go off much quicker? Otherwise, Nod's method is the safest.

**Nimbus replies** The loft was probably not all that cool during any hot weather you might have

enjoyed during the summer, but film is a bit more durable than we may think. As stated, test a roll to check. I remember I had an outdated roll of Fujichrome many years ago that displayed a very warm colour balance when processed. I bought it in a batch of rolls from a large retailer. I hadn't noticed that it was out of date until after exposure.

**Ian Farrell replies** It's an urban myth that professional film goes off more quickly than amateur film. The difference is that the manufacture of professional film is more controlled, meaning colour is more consistent from batch to batch. Past the expiry date, this consistency can no longer be guaranteed, but the film is still fine to use. I have used Velvia 100F more than a year after its expiry. If kept cold it should be fine, but you should probably shoot a test roll before using it for something important.

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# In next week's AP

On sale Tuesday 23 March

## HANDS ON



### PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-G2

Angela Nicholson tries out Panasonic's latest 12.1-million-pixel Micro Four Thirds camera, with touch-sensitive LCD screen and HD capture

## APOY

### APOY ROUND 1 RESULTS

Find out who came top in the Land and Water round of our 2010 APOY competition

# AP 10

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

## ON TEST

### CANON EOS 550D

We test the 'baby EOS 7D' with 18 million pixels, an APS-C-sized sensor and Full HD video



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AP reader Joan Thirlaway pinpoints some of her favourite spots along Hadrian's Wall

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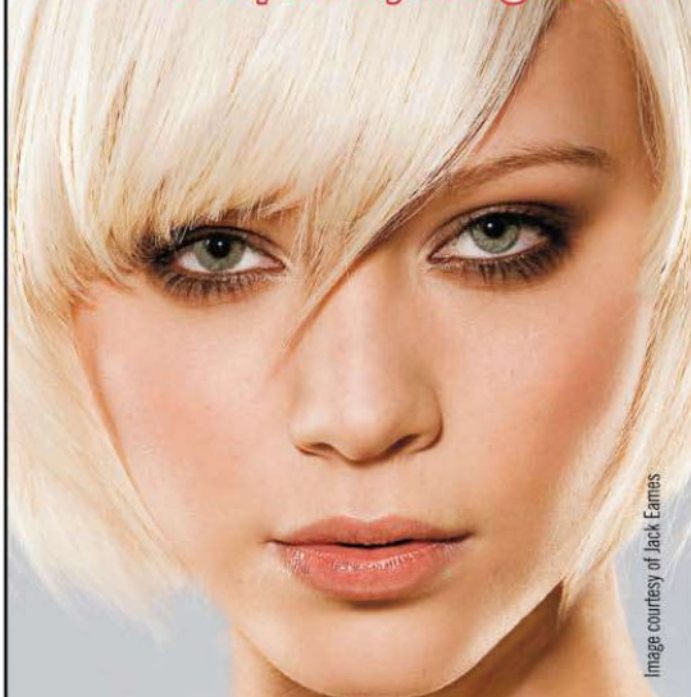


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**Contax RTS**

With 50mm f/1.4 T\* Carl Zeiss Planar

# Contax RTS

**Ivor Matanle** traces the history of a 35mm SLR designed in Germany yet made under licence by Yashica of Japan

**THE ADVENT** of the Contax RTS in 1975 was, to many, a major photographic event of the 1970s as it marked the rebirth of an important brand. Others regarded it more cynically as a middle-rank Japanese manufacturer gaining the right to sell Japanese cameras under a great German name. Like the alliance between Leitz and Minolta, which produced the Leica CL and the Leica R3, it was an example of an increasingly desperate West German camera industry reaching out for a helping hand with the minefield of transition between mechanical and electronic control.

The use of the Contax name had been licensed by Zeiss Ikon in West Germany, which was no longer manufacturing cameras, to Yashica of Japan for a new top-

line 35mm SLR. The Contax RTS was announced with a completely new bayonet lens mount and a range of Carl Zeiss-designed lenses made under licence in Japan. As part of the agreement, Yashica was permitted to produce a separate range of Yashica-branded cameras and lenses with the same lens mount and a more middle-market price, which gave Yashica a foot in each of the two most important SLR markets.

The Contax RTS offered the market something of what the Zeiss Ikon Contarex might have become, had Zeiss Ikon not been forced to cease camera production in 1971 and if it had had the resources to invest in research and development of electronic systems. The Contax RTS

was one, if not two, generations of engineering and electronics design removed from the Contarex Super. Sadly, it could not be said to have the engineering quality of a Contarex, but it weighed less, was dramatically more versatile and offered magnificent handling. Although the camera itself was made in Japan by Yashica (later Kyocera), it was designed in Germany by Ferdinand 'Ferry' Porsche, who knew a thing or two about good handling at speed. Several of the Carl Zeiss lenses in the range announced with the camera were optically identical to their Contarex equivalents. The others, it was claimed, were better, as a result of rapidly advancing computer design techniques.

Many photographic journalists enthused about the new camera's handling, the soft grippy body covering, the extremely accurate 1/2000sec fastest shutter speed and the availability of a measured 4sec setting. The aperture-priority automatic exposure mode, which was the camera's only alternative to manual exposure, was generally agreed to perform better than

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## Contax RTS

An original Contax RTS fitted with the 35-70mm f/3.5 T\* Vario-Sonnar



16mm f/2.8 T\* Distagon

## WATCH OUT FOR

### Disintegrating body covering

The original Contax RTS had a soft, spongy body covering that was great to use when it was new but often did not last. After a year or three, the covering sometimes became sticky or began to come away. On many cameras it had to be replaced. It pays to check the body covering of any original RTS carefully.

### Electronic faults

There were a number of electronic faults that were more prevalent than they should have been in the original camera, which affected shutter operation and metering. All these problems had been rectified in the RTS II and RTS III, so if you are planning to use the camera you buy and not just display it, it is probably best to pay the extra for one of the later cameras.

## YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



A Canon A-1, which, like the RTS, is a true protagonist and technological innovator, but a good deal less expensive to buy.



300mm f/4 T\* Tele-Tessar

## Contax RTS II

Some of the longer lenses with the RTS II, which is fitted with the formidable 85mm f/1.4 T\* Planar



time – remember, this was before multi-mode cameras confused the market even further.

By September 1976, the Contax RTS was advertised, body only, at £271.60, with the 50mm f/1.4 Carl Zeiss Planar costing an additional £116.40. The RTS auto winder was £83.37. The £388 for the RTS and f/1.4 lens compared with (in the same ad) a Canon F-1 with f/1.4 at £309.14 and a Minolta XE-1 with f/1.4 for £278.52. Only the Minolta XM with AE head and f/1.4 lens, which had a very similar specification to the RTS, came close on price at £384.66.

### PARALLEL DEVELOPMENTS

Part of the agreement between Yashica and Carl Zeiss was that Yashica-branded cameras were not to be sold with standard lenses bearing the Carl Zeiss name, and Yashica cameras were not to be advertised in the same advertisement as Contax cameras. By 1979, advertisements in *Amateur Photographer* reveal almost no reference to Contax SLRs. This was presumably because Zeiss Ikon's insistence that the Yashica range was not to appear in the same advertisement as Contax

RTS equipment forced dealers to decide whether it was better value to them to advertise Yashica or Contax. By this time, a Contax RTS with 50mm f/1.4 lens cost £479.80. Yashica models with the same lens mount were around half the price and did much the same job.

The Carl Zeiss lens range initially offered for the Contax RTS was essentially that designed by Carl Zeiss for the ill-fated Zeiss Ikon SL725 (see my article on Icarex in AP 31 July 2004), with some re-design using new computer capability. The 15mm f/3.5 Distagon, 16mm f/2.8 F-Distagon, 18mm f/4 Distagon, 25mm f/2.8 Distagon, 85mm f/1.4 Planar, 500mm f/4.5 Mirotar and 1,000mm f/5.6 Mirotar were all optically identical to the equivalent lenses supplied for the Contarex. The other ten lenses in what was, from the outset, a comprehensive system, were further developed from those listed for the SL725.

### CONTAX FOR AMATEURS

The photokina trade fair in 1978 saw the launch of the Contax SLR for the amateur market, although it was in no sense budget-priced. This was the Contax 139 Quartz, a genuinely revolutionary camera

that was the first from any manufacturer to use the natural oscillation of a quartz crystal to regulate the timing of the shutter and the delay action. In common with trends demonstrated by other SLR manufacturers, the Contax 139 was substantially smaller than the Contax RTS, had TTL (through-the-lens) flash exposure measurement, autoexposure lock and a brighter viewfinder image.

### THE RTS II

From the professional photographer's standpoint, a more interesting development was the announcement in 1982 of the Contax RTS II. Externally almost identical except for the lack of a conventional delay action lever, the RTS was substantially new inside. An important feature for the professional market was the viewfinder showing 97% of the image that would be on the film instead of the 92% shown by the original RTS viewfinder.

Instead of the cloth focal-plane shutter of the original RTS, the updated camera had a shutter made of titanium laminate, timed by a quartz crystal system like that of the Contax 139 and providing speeds of 16-1/2000sec. Like the Contax 139, the RTS II was equipped with TTL flash metering using a silicon photo diode that took a reading from the film surface. Unusually, the RTS II was designed so that the exposure measurement system was not switched on, whatever the camera switch indicated, until

**'From the professional photographer's standpoint, a more interesting development was the announcement of the Contax RTS II'**



200mm f/3.5 T\* Tele-Tessar

180mm f/2.8 T\* Sonnar



### Professional motordrive

This is what a well-heeled collector might aspire to in the Contax RTS range. Then, of course, he or she might also want an RTS III and several specialised lenses that were made by Carl Zeiss in Germany for RTS, plus a 250 back, a bellows and a few other things



Carl Zeiss 2x Mutar

1975

Contax RTS  
first marketed

1978

Contax  
139 Quartz  
announced

1982

Contax RTS II  
announced

1990

Contax RTS III  
appears

1992

Contax ST  
and S2 appear

## 'From the outset the RTS had an impressive range of accessories, although not as broad as that for the Nikon professional cameras'

Contax ST and the Contax S2. The ST was a simplified RTS III with some of the clever bits removed to get the price down. The ST did not have the flash metering for external flash, the vacuum back or the high-speed film advance, but in other respects was similar to the RTS III, with program modes and a full professional specification. The S2 was just the opposite – a fully manual SLR with only spot metering, a mechanical shutter and no provision for an auto-winder. In 1994, the S2b, with centreweighted averaging exposure measurement instead of spot metering, was added to the range. Other models, notably the Contax Aria and the autofocus AX and N1 followed, but are outside the scope of this article.

### SLR LENSES

In all, 28 different Carl Zeiss lenses have been manufactured for the Contax SLR range, with prime lenses from 15mm to 500mm, including 60mm and 100mm Makro-Planars, and five different Vario-Sonnar zooms. All Contax lenses were, and remain, expensive by comparison with most other brands. They are, however, optically and mechanically very good.

While writing this piece, I have been scanning eBay to get an impression of current second-hand RTS camera and lens prices. RTS II bodies seem to be offered at £160–£180, while RTS III bodies cost £350–£400. A 300mm f/4 Sonnar lens was offered at £649, a 60mm f/2.8 Makro Planar at £749, an 85mm f/1.4 at £399.99 and a Mutar 2x converter at £199.

### ACCESSORIES

From the outset, the Contax RTS had an impressive range of accessories, although it was not as broad as that for the Nikon professional cameras with which it was designed to compete. When the RTS II was launched in 1982, the range of electronically based accessories was expanded to create what was called the Contax Real Time Photographic System. This included a versatile bellows macro system, the professional motordrive, the data back D-4 and the P-3 external power pack. An improved and expanded range of interchangeable focusing screens to match the 97% image view was provided for the RTS II. For all models there was the usual impressive range of filters, lens hoods and close-up lenses. **AP**

the exposure counter read 1 or greater. This eliminated the problem of the automatic exposure system keeping the shutter open for long exposures during the initial wind-and-fire procedure while loading in poor light. Instead, the camera permitted the shutter to fire at the single mechanical speed of 1/60sec until the exposure counter reached 1.

Then, in 1990, when the RTS III was announced and reviewed well by photographic magazines worldwide, the RTS brand really came into its own. With a built-in winder and a handgrip, the RTS III certainly looked new, and its specification was sensational. The first camera with in-built flash metering for external studio flash units and a standard data back that printed the date on the gaps between the exposures, the RTS III had a top shutter speed of 1/8000sec and flash synchronisation at 1/250sec. A unique 'vacuum back' facility literally sucked the film against the pressure plate before each exposure, achieving unbeatable film flatness. It also had, wonder of wonders, a variable dioptre eyesight correction facility built into the viewfinder, which is something so many SLR users had longed for.

However, the Contax RTS III was not cheap. On the UK market, there was now a price difference of more than £300 between it and the contemporary amateur market model, the 167MT. To fill the gap, in 1992, two new models appeared: the



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EF-S 10-22mm f3.5-4.5 USM	£649.99
NEW! EF-S 15-85mm f3.5-5.6 IS USM	£1139.99
EF 16-35mm f2.8L mk2 USM	£1139.99
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EF-S 18-55mm IS	£144.99

NEW! EF-S 18-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS	£399
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EF 24-105mm f4L IS USM	£918.99
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EF 28-135mm f3.5-5.6 IS USM	£371
EF 28-200mm f3.5-5.6 IS USM	£319
EF 28-300mm f3.5-5.6L IS USM	£2129.99
EF-S 55-250mm IS	£219.99
EF 70-200mm f2.8L U	£1015.99
EF 70-200mm f2.8L IS USM	£1568
NEW! EF 70-200mm f2.8L IS USM II	£2799.99
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EF 70-300mm f4.5-5.6 DO IS USM	£1116.99
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580 EX II	£449
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2. TTL Distributor	£49.99
3. Off Camera Shoe Adaptor	£19.53
4. Connection Cord 0.6m length	£45
5. Connection Cord 3m length	£48.93
OFF CAMERA ACCESSORIES:	
6. Off Shoe Cord 3	£48.93
7. L Bracket SB-E2	£169

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	£119.00	£44.99	£29.35	£44.03	£89.00	£59.00	£12.87	£19.99	£19.99	£169	£19.99	£7.99	£6.49	£7.99	£22.99	£39.99	£36.69
Canon EOS 40D	BG-E2N	OSKE3	BP511	CB-SL	CA-PS400	CA-S70	ACK-E2	RS-B0N3	TCB0N3	LC-5	Angle Finder C	EP-EX15	Rubbing Frame B	Dioptics	Eyecup EB	WFT-E3A	IFC-500U
	£149.49	£179.99	£89.49	£44.03	£105	£42.99	£58.71	£44.49	£129	£322.96	£169	£19.99	£8.49	£9.99	£6.49	£699	£29.99
Canon EOS 5D Mark II	BG-E6	LP-E6	Wide Strap L6	OSKE3	RC-5	CB-S70	RSB0N3	TCB0N3	LC-5	Angle Finder C	EP-EX15	Rubbing Frame B	Dioptics	Eyecup EB	Focus Screen L6-0.1	WFT-E4	IFC-500U
	£229.49	£71.49	£22.49	£179.99	£19.99	£36	£44.49	£129	£322.96	£169	£19.99	£8.49	£9.99	£6.49	£29.99	£799.99	£29.99
Canon EOS 1D Mark III	LP-E4	ACK-E4	LCE4	CB-S70	RSB0N3	CB-TCB0N	LCS	Angle Finder C	Antifog	Dioptics	Eyecup EG	Focus Screen L6	WFT-E2	OSKE3	Hand Strap E1	Wide Strap L6	IFC500U
	£119.99	£86.03	£377.45	£36	£44.49	£129	£322.96	£169	£28.08	£9.99	£13.84	£29.99	£699.00	£179.99	£24.99	£22.49	£29.99
Canon EOS 1D Mark IV	LP-E4	ACK-E4	LCE4	CB-S70	RSB0N3	CB-TCB0N	LCS	Angle Finder C	Antifog	Dioptics	Eyecup EG	Focus Screen L6	WFT-E2	OSKE3	Hand Strap E1	Wide Strap L6	IFC500U
	£119.99	£86.03	£377.45	£36	£44.49	£129	£322.96	£169	£28.08	£9.99	£13.84	£29.99	£699.00	£179.99	£24.99	£22.49	£29.99

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## SONY α 850



Sony A850

\*Full-frame DSLR shooting at a real-world price\* - Sony press release 2009. The Sony Alpha A850 is a 24.6 megapixel full-frame DSLR that shares virtually all the major features of the flagship A900. The only differences obvious differences being 3fps continuous shooting and a slightly more compact viewfinder.

A850 BODY ONLY	£1694.99 or £69 mth
A850 + 28-75mm	£2098 or £85 mth

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Sony A900

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A900 BODY ONLY	£1898.99 or £77 mth
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**Compact Flash**  
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## Body Adapters

Canon EOS - Canon FD Adapter  
Canon FD - Praktica M42 Adapter  
Canon AF - M42 Adapter  
Minolta MD - M42 Adapter  
Minolta AF - M42  
Nikon - M42 (Praktica/Pentax) Adapter  
Pentax K - M42 Adapter  
Yashica/Contax - M42 Adapter  
Leica M - L Screw 28-90  
Leica M - L Screw 50-75  
Leica M - L Screw 35-135

## C Mounts

C Mount - M42 Screw  
C Mount - Canon AF  
C Mount - Canon FD  
C Mount - Pentax K  
C Mount - Nikon  
C Mount - Minolta MD  
C Mount - Olympus OM  
C Mount T2

## Body Caps

Canon Body Cap  
Canon AF Body Cap  
Minolta Body Cap MD  
Minolta AF Body Cap  
Nikon Body Cap  
Olympus Body Cap  
Pentax K/M Body Cap  
Praktica M42 Body Cap  
Contax/Yashica Body Cap

## Back Caps

Canon Back Cap  
Canon AF Back Cap  
Minolta Back Cap  
Minolta AF Back Cap  
Nikon Back Cap  
Olympus Back Cap  
Pentax K/M Back Cap  
Praktica M42 Back Cap  
Contax/Yashica Back Cap

## Rubber Lens Hood

46mm Rubber Lens Hood  
49mm Rubber Lens Hood  
52mm Rubber Lens Hood  
55mm Rubber Lens Hood  
58mm Rubber Lens Hood  
62mm Rubber Lens Hood  
67mm Rubber Lens Hood  
72mm Rubber Lens Hood  
77mm Rubber Lens Hood

## Wide Angle Rubber Lens HOOD

W/A Rubber Lens Hood 49mm  
W/A Rubber Lens Hood 52mm  
W/A Rubber Lens Hood 55mm  
W/A Rubber Lens Hood 58mm  
W/A Rubber Lens Hood 62mm  
W/A Rubber Lens Hood 67mm

## Small Metal Hoods

27mm  
28mm  
30mm  
34mm  
37mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm

## Shaped Petal Lens Hoods

49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm

## Series 7 Rings

37mm Series 7 Ring  
46mm Series 7 Ring  
49mm Series 7 Ring  
52mm Series 7 Ring  
55mm Series 7 Ring  
58mm Series 7 Ring  
62mm Series 7 Ring  
67mm Series 7 Ring

## Spirit Level

Shoe Fitting 2 Way Spirit Level

## T2 Mounts

T2 Mount Canon Eos  
T2 Mount Canon FD  
T2 Leica R  
T2 Mount M42  
T2 Mount Minolta 7000  
T2 Mount Minolta MD  
T2 Mount Nikon  
T2 Mount Olympus OM  
T2 Olympus 4/3  
T2 Mount Olympus AF  
T2 Mount Pentax AF  
T2 Mount Pentax K  
T2 Mount Praktica B  
T2 Mount Yashica/Contax  
T2 Mount Yashica/Contax AF  
T2 Microscope Adapter

## Snap Caps

27mm  
28mm  
30/30.5mm  
34mm  
37mm  
40.5mm  
43mm  
46mm  
48mm  
49mm  
52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm  
82mm  
86mm  
95mm  
105mm

## Double threaded Filter rings with screw retaining ring

25.5mm	52mm
27mm	55mm
28mm	58mm
30mm	62mm
30.5mm	67mm
34mm	72mm
35.5mm	77mm
37mm	82mm
37.5mm	86mm
40.5mm	95mm
43mm	105mm
46mm	127mm
49mm	

## Reversing Rings

52mm Canon FD  
55mm Canon FD  
52mm Contax/Yashica  
55mm Contax/Yashica  
52mm Minolta  
55mm Minolta  
49mm Minolta Auto Focus  
55mm Minolta Auto Focus  
52mm - M42  
55mm - M42  
58mm - M42  
52mm Nikon  
49mm Olympus  
52mm Olympus  
49mm Pentax K  
52mm Pentax K

## Rotating Double threaded filter rings with screw retainer

52mm  
55mm  
58mm  
62mm  
67mm  
72mm  
77mm  
82mm  
86mm

## Stepping Rings - The first number is the camera lens filter thread

25 - 28mm	30.5 - 25mm	37 - 37.5mm	40.5 - 49mm	49 - 39mm	52 - 67mm	58 - 77mm	69 - 77mm
25 - 30mm	30.5 - 28mm	37 - 37.5mm	40.5 - 52mm	49 - 43mm	55 - 37mm	60 - 62mm	72 - 58mm
25 - 37mm	30.5 - 35.5	37 - 40.5mm	43 - 34mm	49 - 46mm	55 - 46mm	62 - 46mm	72 - 62mm
27 - 28mm	30.5 - 37mm	37 - 43mm	43 - 37mm	49 - 48mm	55 - 48mm	62 - 49mm	72 - 67mm
27 - 30mm	30.5 - 43mm	37 - 46mm	43 - 46mm	49 - 52mm	55 - 49mm	62 - 52mm	72 - 77mm
27 - 37mm	30.5 - 46mm	37 - 49mm	43 - 49mm	49 - 55mm	55 - 52mm	62 - 55mm	72 - 82mm
27 - 43mm	30.5 - 49mm	37 - 52mm	43 - 52mm	49 - 58mm	55 - 58mm	62 - 58mm	72 - 86mm
27 - 46mm	30.5 - 52mm	37 - 55mm	46 - 37mm	49 - 62mm	55 - 62mm	62 - 67mm	72 - 95mm
27 - 49mm	32.5 - 37mm	37 - 58mm	46 - 43mm	49 - 67mm	55 - 67mm	62 - 72mm	77 - 62mm
27 - 52mm	34 - 37mm	37.5 - 37mm	46 - 48mm	49 - 72mm	58 - 37mm	62 - 77mm	77 - 67mm
28 - 27mm	34 - 43mm	37.5 - 43mm	46 - 49mm	49 - 77mm	55 - 72mm	67 - 55mm	77 - 72mm
28 - 30mm	34 - 46mm	37.5 - 46mm	46 - 52mm	50 - 49mm	58 - 46mm	67 - 58mm	77 - 82mm
28 - 30.5mm	34 - 49mm	37.5 - 49mm	46 - 55mm	50 - 52mm	58 - 48mm	67 - 62mm	77 - 86mm
28 - 35.5mm	35.5 - 37mm	37.5 - 52mm	46 - 58mm	50 - 55mm	58 - 49mm	67 - 72mm	82 - 67mm
28 - 37mm	35.5 - 49mm	37 - 46mm	48 - 46mm	50 - 58mm	58 - 52mm	67 - 77mm	82 - 72mm
30 - 28mm	37 - 27mm	39 - 46mm	48 - 49mm	52 - 46mm	58 - 55mm	67 - 82mm	82 - 86mm
30 - 30.5mm	37 - 28mm	39 - 49mm	48 - 52mm	52 - 48mm	58 - 62mm	69 - 62mm	86 - 82mm
30 - 37mm	37 - 30mm	39 - 52mm	48 - 55mm	52 - 49mm	58 - 67mm	69 - 67mm	86 - 95mm
30 - 43mm	37 - 30.5mm	40.5 - 37mm	48 - 58mm	52 - 55mm	58 - 72mm	69 - 72mm	95 - 105mm
30 - 46mm	37 - 34mm	40.5 - 43mm	49 - 34mm	52 - 58mm			
30 - 49mm	37 - 35.5mm	40.5 - 46mm	49 - 37mm	52 - 62mm			

## Rollei 66 Step Rings

Step Ring Rol 66 - 62mm  
Step Ring Rol 66 - 67mm  
Step Ring Rol 66 - 72mm

## Hass Stepping Rings

Step Ring Hass B50 - 52mm  
Step Ring Hass B50 - 55mm  
Step Ring Hass B50 - 58mm  
Step Ring Hass B50 - 67mm  
Step Ring Hass B60 - 62mm  
Step Ring Hass B60 - 67mm  
Step Ring Hass B70 - 77mm



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**Body Price**  
**£524.99**  
**+18-55mm IS**  
**£599.99**



## Canon EOS 500D

Body SRP £339.99 Lens sold separately

- 10.1 MP CMOS sensor
- Up to 3 frames per sec.
- 2.5" LCD with Live View
- DIGIC III processor
- Compact & lightweight

**Body Price**  
**£319.99**

EOS 1000D + 18-55mm **£369.99**  
1000D + 18-55 + 75-300 **£489.99**

- 12.2 MP CMOS sensor
- 3.5fps
- 3.0" LCD with Live View
- EOS Cleaning System
- Compact & lightweight

**Body Price**  
**£432.00**

450D + 17-85mm IS **£699.99**  
450D + Sigma 55-200 DC **£519.00**

- 15.1 MP CMOS sensor
- 6.3 frames per second
- ISO range up to 12800
- 3.0" LCD with Live View
- Magnesium alloy body

**Body Price**  
**£697.00**

EOS 50D + 17-85mm IS **£939.99**  
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PowerShot A3100 IS	£169.00	PowerShot SX1 IS	£419.00
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IXUS 105	£169.00	PowerShot SX20 IS	£349.00
Digital IXUS 110 IS	£189.00	PowerShot SX200 IS	£229.00
IXUS 130	£249.00	PowerShot S90	£319.00
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- 10.0 Megapixels
- 5x wide-angle lens
- Optical IS
- 2.8" Vari-Angle LCD Screen
- High Sensitivity
- High-Speed ISO



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20mm f/2.8 USM	£424.99	300mm f/4.0L USM IS	£1,113.99	EF-S 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6 IS	£459.00
24mm f/1.4 Mk II USM	£1,369.99	400mm f/2.8 USM IS	£6,919.00	EF-S 18-200mm (Unboxed)	£429.99
24mm f/2.8	£368.99	400mm f/4.0 DO L USM IS	£5,649.99	24-70mm f/2.8L USM	£999.99
28mm f/1.8 USM	£386.99	400mm f/5.6L USM	£1,149.99	24-105mm f/4.0L IS USM	£899.99
28mm f/2.8	£162.99	500mm f/4.0L USM IS	£5,599.99	24-105mm (White Box)	£749.99
35mm f/1.4L USM	£1,199.99	600mm f/4.0L USM IS	£7,638.99	28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 USM IS	£389.99
35mm f/2.0	£219.99	800mm f/5.6L IS USM	£10,499.00	28-300mm f/3.5-5.6L IS USM	£2,249.99
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- Live View Function
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- Small and light-weight body

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**Tokina**

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62mm UV	£21.06	77mm Circular Polarizing	£77.31
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TAM 19-35 F3.5/4.5.....£269	28 F2.8 blk.....£999
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Teleplus 2x MC7.....£69	645 Pro TL inc 80 F2.8 N
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540EZ.....£79 550EX.....£229	645 Pro TL + 80 F2.8 N
580EX.....£289	+ WLF + 120 RFH.....£349
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Polaroid Mag S	Exc / E- £229-£79
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Prism Finder S	E- £59
CDS MF Finder S	E+ / E++ £79-£299
Autobulbous S	E- £219
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70-300mm F4.5-6.3 DO IS USM	E++ / Mint- £699-£749
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80-200mm F4.5-6.3 EF	E- £399
100-200mm F4.5	E- £39
100-400mm F4.5-5.6 L IS USM	E+ / E++ £929-£949
135mm F2 L USM	E- £699
135mm F2.8 EF Soft Focus	Mint- £249
180mm F3.5 L USM Macro	Mint- £399
400mm F2.8 L USM	E+ £3,299
45mm F1.8 DO USM	E+ £149-£179
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1.4x EF MkII Extender	Mint- £229
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## Canon Manual

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T90 Body Only	E- £25-£29
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FTB CL Chrome + 50mm F1.8	E- £69
FTB CL Chrome Body Only	E- £69
FX Chrome + 50mm F1.8	Exc £39
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24mm F2.8 FD	E++ £89
24mm F2.8 Block	E- £85
24mm F2.8 FD	E+ / E++ £79-£85
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28mm F2.8 Block	E- £85
28mm F2.8 FD	As Seen / Mint- £20-£49
28-55mm F3.5-4.5 FD	E- £39
35mm F2.8 Block	E- £39
35mm F2.8 FD	E- £35
35mm F3.5 Block	E+ / E++ £25-£35
35-70mm F3.5-4.5 FD	Exc / E+ £19-£29
35-105mm F3.5 FD	E- £75
50mm F1.8 Block (Sample Lens)	E- £99
50mm F3.5 FD Macro + Tube	E- £89
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75-200mm F4.5 FD	Exc / E++ £29-£59
80-200mm F4 Block	E- £69
80-200mm F4.5 FD	E- £69
100-200mm F2.8 Block	E- £59-£75
100-200mm F2.8 FD	E- £69
100-200mm F4 Macro + Tube	E+ £199
100-200mm F4.5 Block	E+ / E++ £39-£49
100-200mm F5.6 FD	E+ / E++ £29-£39
100-300mm F5.6 FD	E- £79
135mm F3.5 FD	E- £25
200mm F2.8 FD	Exc £89
200mm F4 FD	As Seen £20
300mm F2.8 FD L	Exc £850
300mm F5.6 Block	E- £85
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400mm F4.5 Block	E- £299
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188A Speedlite	E- £75
244T Speedlite	E- £119
277T Speedlite	E+ £35
300TL Speedlite	E+ / E++ £39-£59
533G Speedlite	E+ / E++ £39-£109
ML3 Macro	E+ / E++ £129-£149
AE Powerwinder FN	E+ / E++ £79-£119
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Winder A2	E+ / E++ £29-£79
Winder A	E+ / E++ £29-£79
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Autobulbous - Release	E++ £109
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Bowens Profile 41 + Stand Kit	E++ £149
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Metz 450L3 Ncad	E- £39
Metz 450L4 Ncad	E- £69
Metz 450CT3 Flash	E- £59
Metz 450CT4 Ncad	E+ £79
Metz 450CT5 Flash	E+ £79
Metz 50M25 Flash	E- £199
Metz 450L20 Digital Flash	E- £149
Metz 60CT1 Flash	As Seen £25
Metz 70M25 Flash	E++ £169
Metz 70M25 Digital	E++ / Mint- £449

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5030CW Chrome Body Only	E- £549
5030CW Chrome Body Only	E+ / E++ £449-£499
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5030ELM Body Only	E- £139
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50mm F4 C Black	E+ / E++ £279-£399
50mm F4 C Chrome	E- £449
50mm F4 CF	Exc / E- £379-£449
50mm F4 Cf L	E+ £1,199
60-120mm F4.8 FE	E+ / E++ £749-£899
60mm F3.5 L	Exc £299
120mm F4 CF Macro	E+ / E++ £599-£649
135mm F5.6 C Macro	E+ / E++ £299-£349
150mm F3.2 HC	E+ £1,399
150mm F4 C Black	As Seen / E++ £149-£299
150mm F4 C Chrome	Exc £149
150mm F4 C	As Seen / E++ £299-£349
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Canon EOS 10 MkIII Body Only	E- £999
Canon EOS 10 Body Only	E- £999-£1,099
Canon EOS 10 Body Only	E- £999-£1,099
Canon EOS 300 Body Only	E++ £229-£249
Canon EOS 300 Body Only	E++ £499
Canon EOS 300 Body Only	E++ £229-£249
Canon EOS 100 Body Only	E++ £199-£229
Canon EOS 4000 Body Only	E++ £349
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Canon EOS 300D Body Only	E- £169
Canon EOS 300D Body Only	As Seen £119
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Canon BG-E1 Grip (300D)	E- £45
Canon BG-E2 Grip	E++ £69
Canon BG-E2 Grip (2030/40D)	E- £79
Canon BG-E3 Grip	E- £59
Canon BG-E4 Grip	E+ / E++ £399-£599
Canon BG-E5 Grip (500D)	Mint- £79
Canon BG-E5 Grip	E- / Mint- £49-£79
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Epson RD1S Body Only	E++ £999
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Nikon D100 Body Only	E- £179
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Nikon D70 Body Only	E- £399
Nikon MB-D100 Grip	E- £349
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Nikon WFT-2 Wireless Transmitter	E++ £249
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Olympus E1 Body Only	E++ £179-£199
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Olympus EP1 + 14-42mm	Mint- £249
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Olympus FL-S60R Flash	E- £199
Olympus FL-S60R Flash Bracket	E- £199
Olympus SR-11 Ringflash Set	Mint- £449
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12-60mm F2.8-4.5 SWD	E++ / Mint- £549
14-54mm F2.8-3.5 Zuiko	E++ £249-£299
40-150mm F3.5-4.5 Zuiko	E++ £139
40-150mm F4.5 Zuiko	Unused / New £39
50-200mm F2.8-3.5 Zuiko	E++ £169-£249
70-300mm F4.5 Zuiko	Mint- £279
Sigma 24mm F1.8 E DG	E++ £199
Sigma 30mm F1.4 DC HSM	E++ £249
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Pentax K100D + 18-55mm	Unused £279
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Pentax Optio V10	Mint- £79
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Sony A350 Body Only	E++ £249
Sony A350 Body Only	E++ £249
Sony DSCG-V3	E++ £149

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ikon WF2 Wireless Transmitter	E++ £249
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ikon Cx200 995 + Access	E- £99
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ilympus E3 + 14-45mm	Mint- £299
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ilympus E500 + 14-45mm	E- £169
ilympus EP1 + 14-42mm	Mint- £249
ilympus E20P + Access	E++ £299
ilympus SP500Z	E++ £299
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EF 24-70 f2.8 L U	£969
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EF 28-200 f3.5/5.6	£633
EF 50 f1.8	£88
EF 50 f1.8	£599
EF 70-200 f4/5.6 IS	£389
EF 75-300 f4/5.6	£169
EF 85mm f1.8 U	£309
EF 100 f2.8 U macro	£435
EF 100-400 f4.5/5.6 L IS U	£1239
EF 10-22 f3.5/4.5 U	£635
EF 15-85 f3.5/5.6 IS U	£549
EF 17-55 f2.8 IS U	£779
EF 17-85 f4/5.6 IS U	£269
EF 18-135 f3.5/5.6 IS	£289
EF 18-200 f3.5/5.6 IS	£379
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EF 60 f2.8 macro	£339
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8G-E2n	£149

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24-70 f2.8 ZA SSM T*	£1200
28-75 f2.8 SAM	£569
30 f2.8 SAM macro	£139
DT 50 f1.8 SAM	£137
DT 55-200 f4/5.6 SAM	£159
70-400 f4/5.6 G	£1149
DT 75-300 f4.5/5.6	£179
85 f1.4 ZA T*	£949
135 f1.8 ZA T*	£999
500 f8 reflex	£529
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20mm f2.8 AIS	E++ £329
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50mm f2.5 Macro	£249
85mm f1.8 USM	£329
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100mm f2.8 Macro USM	£459
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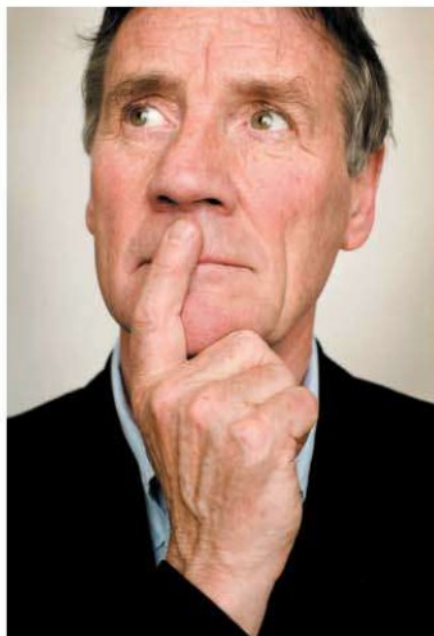
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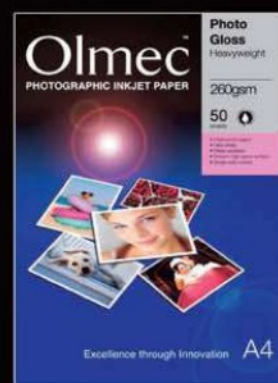
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# OGDEN CHESNUTT

... wonders whether cameras allow men to bond and help them communicate their feelings

**TRYING** to get an infant to pose for a photograph is kind of like trying to get a cat to walk on a lead. It has no objection at doing what you want it to do... until you want it to do what you want it to do.

I found myself wanting to take my neighbour's Siamese for a stroll the other weekend while trying to shoot my grandson's first passport photo ahead of a family trip to the United States later this spring. Because my son-in-law is half American, the boy is claiming American citizenship.

'The eyes and ears, everything must be exactly the size and proportion stated on the form because US customs people are really particular when it comes to this sort of thing,' my daughter, Leila, assured me.

'I've been to America,' I said. 'Those people don't seem too concerned about their size!'

'Just don't make him look like a drug mule,' she snapped.

We were all there: Leila, Stuart and the boy, even Eli, who sat supping coffee in the kitchen. The boy lay on a sheet of white paper in the living room, inspecting his fingers. He plunged a fist into his mouth, and I raised my camera.

'Wait!' shouted Leila. 'He can't have anything in his mouth in the picture.'

She waved the form at me. I waited. And waited. And the boy replaced one fist with the other and chewed on his appendages, cooing with delight. 'Can't you make him stop?' I asked.

'He's a baby. He's not going to listen to me.'

So I had a coffee with Eli, who I could tell was eager to get down the pub. He asked to see my camera. He poked around and grunted to himself, then suggested I push my ISO up to 800 so I wouldn't have to use a flash. I wished I'd thought of it first. 'You'll bleach out his skin,' Eli said, driving the point home. I clumsily reprogrammed my camera and looked over to see Leila nursing my supposed subject.

'That couldn't wait five minutes?' I said, exasperated.

'You want him to be angry?' she replied.

'You think you'll get his picture in just five minutes?' Eli asked.

I made another coffee, and soon Stuart joined us. He had his camera, the one I bought for him, and was flicking through pictures of the boy, holding them up to show us every so often.

Over the years I've noticed more and more the odd ways in which men communicate and experience life. Women, or those I have known well, prefer experiencing a special moment as it happens, investing themselves fully into it, whereas men feel this need to conquer it by capturing it on camera. For us it's as if we didn't really have fun on that holiday in 1986 unless we have the pictures to prove it. Or we never saw the Grand Canyon

unless we can document that we were there. Memories don't seem to be enough for us. Sure, I'm generalising, but it occurred to me in my tiny kitchen in London just then that, rightly or wrongly, it was our cameras that allowed Stuart and Eli and me, three people

with very different backgrounds and interests, not only to bond but also communicate feelings from the boarded-up closet where males keep their emotions safely stored away.

That's pretty powerful stuff, I thought, smiling to myself, impressed by my ability to examine my own feelings. If only my ex-wife could see me now! The three of us sat there staring into our laps, silently scrolling through pictures and holding up for all to see the odd one that makes us feel special or proud. I considered which camera I would buy my grandson in a few years and looked over to see if he looked like a Canon or a Nikon man – or, you know, even Olympus. That's OK too. And when I did I noticed he was back on the white paper. 'Is he ready now?' I asked Leila.

'He's asleep,' she said.

I sprang from my chair. 'You're kidding!' The other two jumped up with me like deputies, cameras primed. 'But we were... can't you just wake him up?'

'Not if you want a meltdown. Seriously, dad, he'll cry all afternoon. Surely you remember what that's like.'

Sadly, I didn't. Probably because I never took a picture of it. **AP**

**'It was our cameras that allowed Stuart and Eli and me not only to bond but also to communicate our feelings'**

An avid AP reader since birth, **Ogden Chesnutt** lives for photography and the sound of a tripped shutter. In the third issue of each month he shares his photographic experiences and thoughts, as well as his adventures with his camera club friend Eli.

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